

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD]

No. 266.—VOL. XI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JUNE 13, 1868.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MADAME LAMBERT AND VARIMONT.]

ELLEN LAMBERT'S TWENTY YEARS.

By M. T. CALDER.

CHAPTER XIV.

Falsehood puts on the face of simple truth,
And masks 't' th' habits of plain honesty,
When she in heart intends most villainy.

Mirror for Magistrates.

JOHN had scarcely reached the room when Madame Lambert started up from the bed.

"Turn the carriage, I say, Robert, do you hear me? Turn the carriage, and ride past them again. I will see that girl's face once more," exclaimed she, in an angry voice.

John stared at her in utter astonishment, unable to utter a word. She herself was glancing around bewilderedly. She passed her hand across her forehead presently, and for the first time in his experience spoke to John in a weak, imploring voice:

"John, John, what is the matter? What has happened to me?"

"Indeed, I can't say; but you had some strange sickness come over you when you started for your drive, and the coachman brought you back. We were all frightened dreadfully, Madame Lambert, dreadfully frightened!"

"Sickness! What has sickness to do with me?" There was a vague trouble in the voice, a momentary dread. "How was I ill, John?"

"Indeed, madam, I can't exactly say; you'll have the doctor," taking courage by the unwontedly gentle voice.

But she answered with something of the old sharpness. "No doctor! Don't mention a doctor to me."

Upon which John glanced uneasily behind him, wishing he could give a hint to the coachman in time to hinder the physician's appearance, and conjuring up some excuse to take him below.

"How did I seem, John? I remember nothing

since—since I was out in the coach. Of course I fainted," she asked, sitting up, and leaning her head against the bed-post. She did her best to smother the latent anxiety lingering in the tone, but John detected it, and said:

"The coachman knows better than I do. He saw you at first, Madame Lambert, and seemed to think it was—"

"Well, was what? Speak out, man!"
"Was a stroke of some sort, madame; a stroke of some sort."

Madame Lambert rose, slipped down from the bed, and walked to the great oval mirror, which hung over the toilet table. She bent her sallow, wrinkled face close to the glass, opened her mouth, and, putting out her tongue, worked it from side to side.

She turned around with a laugh, which sounded like a hiss, and which made John start, nervously.

"No paralysis!—positively no paralysis! The fates are kind to me," she muttered. "But yet I am numb, feel queerly, and it was certainly something serious that I should lose my senses. Did you use any restoratives?"

"No, ma'am," stammered John, "we didn't. Maria went down into the kitchen for some mustard. I'll go down and call her."

He left the room in haste, for he heard voices in the great hall, and knew that another moment would bring the coachman and doctor into her presence. Down stairs he rushed in desperate haste, and at the very door he seized the astonished physician, and, with a dexterous movement, thrust him out upon the steps, and closed the door upon him.

"Coachman, make it right with the doctor," whispered John, as he peered through a crack of the door, as though not daring to allow more space, for fear the obnoxious man of medicine should make forcible entrance. "The mistress has come to, and she won't have a doctor. And I'll never have another one called, if she is burnt up, or drowned, because it's no use. If she wants to live her twenty years she will, in spite of everything, will Madame Lambert! and a doctor can't kill nor cure her."

Upon which he closed the door, and hurried out to summon Maria, who ran up the stairs with her accustomed trepidation, and might well have been startled to find the mistress she had left lying stirless, pacing to and fro with flashing eyes and energetic gestures.

"Maria," said she, "go down to the library and find me that great book bound in velvet, with the Lambert arms on the cover. It is a medical book, and it ought to be in the right-hand case. I have not touched it for years, but I want it now."

Maria, thankful to escape the usual torrent of invectives, performed the errand briskly.

Madame Lambert put the book on the table, and sat down in the chair before it, bending eagerly over the volume, and turning the leaves with a nervous hand.

"Apoplexy!" muttered she, glancing at the heading of the page, "it is nonsense to look at that! Have I not lived as frugally as a charwoman? I have not left any loophole for such an enemy to steal through."

And then she turned to the P's, and finding Paralysis, read the article through slowly and carefully. There was no indecision on her face as she finished and glanced again towards the mirror.

"It is not apoplexy, nor paralysis," repeated she triumphantly, her hand running lightly along the pages. But in another moment a shadow fell upon her face. She had opened accidentally at the C's, and fixing her eyes upon a page she read fiercely, and presently turned round.

"Maria, is Robert the coachman in the house? Send him up to me if he be. Or if he has gone home, let John go for him at once. I want to see him."

Robert was down stairs, and made his appearance promptly, though with the air of one not knowing whether he was to be blamed or praised.

"Robert," said Madame Lambert, with her hand still on that open page, "did you notice any peculiar appearance when I was taken ill? Have they told you that it was all a blank to me? I want to know if I fell down limp and nerveless, like one in a fainting fit."

"Indeed, Madame Lambert, you sat up straight, and if your face hadn't been so pallid, and your eyes turned up, I mightn't have suspected there was anything the matter."

"Eyes turned up!" repeated his mistress, setting her teeth into the thin bloodless lip. "Well, well, it does not matter so much now, since it is over. That will do, Robert. When you go down the street, stop and leave word with Varimont that I want him to come to me immediately."

Robert retreated, and shortly Maria re-appeared, but her mistress sent her away again, with an impatient gesture.

"I want to be alone. Perhaps I can sleep," said she.

But it looked very little like sleep, when she went pacing to and fro, along the room, her hands clasped across her breast, her eyes gleaming with fierce brilliancy.

"Catalepsy! that is it, beyond a question!" muttered she. "It is something I never thought about. I have guarded the body with jealous care. I never dreamed one must be prudent and temperate likewise with the mind. Alack! when I felt so secure, so positive that I had left no loophole open, for the insidious attack of disease, to think I am confronted by such a foe!"

She flung her hands upwards with a passionate gesture, and then bent down again over the book. Her face wore a less tragic expression when she raised it up.

"At least there is no immediate danger. One can withstand the disease for years. Twenty is all I ask for. Bah! I will not be frightened yet. But it took hold of my heart with a horrible grip, the fear that I might die now, and fail of my purpose. Henceforward I will not be satisfied with half-measures! My spells shall work more swiftly!"

A deadly malignity glittered in her black eyes, the thin, haggard, wrinkled face looked more witch-like than ever. John came to the door, to say that Varimont was not at the fruiterer's. Had not been there for two days.

Madame Lambert dashed off a hasty line, and sealed it.

"Take that to his lodgings, and if you see him, say I am in no mood to brook delay."

And while she waited, she paced to and fro again, like a wild beast caged from free roaming. Once she sat down in the easy-chair, and shut her eyes.

"I must learn to be economical of my passion. I must not let this fiery rage fret and wear upon my nerves," she muttered. But the next moment she started up again.

"Bah! there are some things too hard, impossible even for me! I can defy appetite, and love of ease and pleasure. I can bear torment of body, and smile disdainfully at the weakness of fear. But I cannot control my mind. I cannot bid the thoughts that burn and sting there, take their departure and leave me in peace. I cannot order this life blood, which goes seething and hissing through my veins, whenever the magic key-note from that strange centre of mind touches upon this one stirring theme. I cannot cool it to calmness and steadiness. My grandmother's spirit could not have chafed so fiercely against the outer tenement, or it would have failed to stand so securely against the shocks of time. I must be on my guard. I cannot die. I will not die until I have accomplished my vow."

She stamped her foot and beat her hands together, and presently swung open the door between her chamber and the adjoining apartment, and stood looking in upon the pictured scenes there, every moment growing more and more furious and impatient for Varimont's appearance.

He came at last, and blanched, like the others, before her gaze of anger.

"I could not come before. I—I was ill. I haven't been out of my room for two days," he said, deprecatingly.

"Illness of mind, or body?" asked Madame Lambert, her keen eyes seeming to pierce through the mask of composure he assumed. "I sent, to tell you I am not satisfied with you. I want more direct results. They come too tardily."

Varimont turned uneasily in his seat.

"I don't see what more I can do, indeed I don't, madame."

An evil sneer curled her lip, as she replied, coldly:

"But you must see, Varimont. I say I will have different results, and that speedily. If you choose, I can select another agent. But you know the penalty for yourself."

Varimont's evil, sinister face was turned away from her, to hide the sudden angry flush which crept through its sallow skin. But she saw the clenching of the long, slim hands.

"Look you, Monsieur Varimont," said she, rising up from her chair, and standing over him, "I guess

the ugly thoughts which are disturbing your mind just now. I warn you it is of no use for you to cheat me. You tried it once, poor idiot! you thought to steal a little of the gold passing through your hands. You said, 'she is a poor, feeble, superannuated old woman, and it will be easy for me to feather my own nest, while she thinks I am faithfully attending to her business.' Well, monsieur, how did the attempt succeed?"

She laughed scornfully as she concluded. Varimont's face became of a greenish yellow. He lifted up his eyes with sudden angry defiance, and glared upon her. Madame Lambert met his gaze with those strange, black eyes of hers, that frightful sardonic smile on her lips. For a moment they faced each other thus, and then the man's eyelids quivered, dropped, and turning his face away, he moved himself again uneasily in his seat, and exclaimed querulously:

"I don't see anything that can be done."

Madame Lambert smiled triumphantly.

"Make the case your own. You found a way once, no doubt you will be enlightened now, if you search for means."

"What would you have?" repeated he, sullenly.

"More of change than I have witnessed of late," returned she in a voice of quiet determination.

"The lad has been thrust out from his work," said Varimont.

"True, but in the very act he made a friend, which neutralizes the effect. Besides, they are cheerful. I read it on their faces, and some one, mark me, Varimont, some one has taken them up. Who is it?"

Varimont winced again.

"It's not my doing, I'm sure," he said, querulously, "I don't see how you can blame me."

"Who is it?" repeated she, with increased sternness.

"I saw a young man and a young woman in the carriage with them. Who is she?"

"I'm sure I feel as sorry about it as you can. What ill luck sent her here I can't understand. That's one thing why I've kept out of the way."

Madame Lambert bit her lip with fierce rage.

"My fears were prophetic!" she muttered. "Alack! things are indeed going wrong. That she, she of all others, should be giving them help and countenance!—I tell you, man, there must be a bold stroke, to extricate us from this snarl!"

Varimont in his heart secretly echoed this sentiment. A snarl indeed! His teeth almost knocked together, as he thought of it. What had his careful watching that very morning shown him, but the dark-faced Gualcanti sitting in the rear yard of the grocer's, petting and feeding the little creature, who impersonated, for Varimont, a very imp from the infernal regions.

Had she established herself there? The organ-grinder had left the town. Varimont knew it, for he had hired a boy to follow his movements. Why had the woman and the terrible monkey lingered? A snarl indeed!

Upon these bitter reflections broke in Madame Lambert's icy voice.

"I have been thinking, Varimont; I have been thinking out a little series of desirable events, which ought to occur within this next fortnight. I shall depend upon you to see that they transpire. The first is, that this indiscreet young benefactress, with plenty of money at her command, must be enticed away. I should prefer decidedly that she filled her carriage with more deserving occupants. Do you think it can be done?"

Varimont nodded.

"Very well, let it be done according to previous instructions. Now for the rest."

She bent forward close to his ear, and whispered a single sentence.

Varimont started, as if the thin, revengful lips had stung or bitten him.

"But madame—madame—" he stammered, "this is something the law looks after closely."

She smiled in deadly sarcasm.

"The law! My conscientious and cautious Varimont, how very scrupulous you have always been about offending the majesty of the law!"

Varimont's lowered eyelids hid a glare of sullen rage. How his hands quivered with the fierce desire to strangle out for ever that hateful, mocking voice. If he had dared!

"You understand that in case of your refusal to execute my wishes, the law has the deadliest of all claims upon you. You know, that to desert my service means ruin for you in every sense of the word," she continued more quietly. "I need not remind you of the contrast between your condition when I took you up, and your position now. I acknowledge that your improvement has astonished me. I freely admit that you are sharp and clever.

That, indeed, is why I choose you for these tasks, but I warn you that your path is more swiftly downward, if you try to run away from your service to me. But why do I waste words? The thing will be done. You can do it, and in such a way that no one will dream of your connection with it. Let it occur next week. I have no reason for it, but I will give you a generous sum in gold the very morning after. There are several arrangements to be made first, which will occupy the remaining days of the week. Let it happen next week."

She rose again, looking steadily into his face, which, though still pallid, settled into grim determination.

"It shall be done," answered Varimont, and bowing, he passed out.

As he reached the outer gate he paused a moment, and looked back at the old gray building.

"Yes, Madame Lambert," muttered he through his clenched teeth, "this thing shall be done, for the gold, and because I have no good will to them myself. But I will soon free myself from your malice. I will find a way to free myself from this snarl, and from—you!"

CHAPTER IV.

MISS DAVENAL was somewhat surprised by the arrival of a letter from Lord Windermere, almost as soon as the return mail could bring it.

She smiled brightly as she withdrew from the hasty scrawl the crisp Bank of England note, and murmured:

"It is like Lord Windermere. If they would let him alone he would achieve wonders. I must own this is done in the most chivalrous delicacy of spirit. So I am to bestow it without allowing them to have any suspicion from whence it comes. I am a woman, and know how such things can be done. Thank your lordship for the compliment! but in truth I rather shrink from the task. And yet I am very glad. It will be quite a little fortune for them; I'm thankful he didn't restrict it to Bella's use, though I am sure it was of her he was thinking. She would be the proudest about receiving it, and yet would spend it all on herself, I dare say. But dear, little, straightforward Nina will feel it most deeply, and yet look up to me with those honest eyes of hers, and say, 'Thank you, Miss Davenal, we do need it very much, and it is very good of you to give it.' She's a wonderful girl, and if Lord Windermere saw with my eyes—But he doesn't, and perhaps it is as well. Bella will make a magnificent Lady Windermere, and Nina would keep just the same as she is now, the sweetest, dearest, most unselfish little creature."

Miss Davenal broke off from these meditations with a light laugh.

"This Mr. Forsay is a very agreeable person. I know very well he is aware of the legend connected with those provoking rings. Is there really a spell? I like him very much, to be sure, but—pahaw! I know better. There is a stronger, holier spell. I defy any other to conquer it!"

And here Miss Davenal smiled softly into the glass. She had been all the while arranging her magnificent tresses. Turning around she found that her attendant, who had really the appearance of some quiet, demure old dowager, had entered the room and was taking her work from the basket on the table.

"Are you going out again this afternoon, Miss Davenal?"

"Yes, and you are going too, Aunt; I haven't introduced you yet to my new friends, but I've told them all about you, and I shall take you there to-day. I want you to get a basket filled with all the nice things one requires for a supper, and we'll take it along with us in the carriage, because I am going to invite myself to spend the afternoon and evening, and thus will guard against their being unprepared. As soon as you've seen to it we'll have Dixon bring the carriage."

And so it happened that Miss Davenal broke in upon the Claxton group, not like a sunbeam, but rather like a whole flood of sunshine.

"Here I come, with the petition to stay here all the afternoon and evening, instead of going off on a picnic by myself. Don't say me nay, good people, for see I come accompanied by my endorsement of respectability. Behold my aunt!" she exclaimed, breaking into one of her radiant smiles, and flourishing her hand dramatically towards the stout woman in black silk, who followed rather hesitatingly behind her.

Dixon brought up the rear, by no means ingloriously, flanked as he was by the huge basket, from beneath whose wicker cover peeped sundry pairs of tiny webbed feet, with a charming surrounding of green and red, suggestive of salad.

Of course there was a little bustle in the quiet room. Mrs. Claxton smiled pleasantly. The bright,

gay, yet melancholy girl was like a poem or a novel to her, and cheated her out of many of her own wearisome thoughts, by the exhilarating sparkle of her looks and talk. Nolan raised his head with an animated smile, Bella crossed the room with an unwonted eagerness of welcome, and little Floy, leaving her lessons, came running up, to receive a word from her new friend. It was Nina's gentle fingers, however, which began unfastening her cloak, and untying the bonnet ribbons.

"The rest of the day! Oh, Miss Davenal, this is another of your beautiful surprises!" said she, for she had not lost the hint suggested by the basket, which had disappeared into the kitchen, where Ruth was dancing up and down before it, in an ecstasy of delight.

And then she went forward and spoke to "Aunt," brought her a chair, and began to take her shawl, from which attentions that worthy personage retreated with one of the old-time courtseys.

"Bless your heart! dear child. I can wait upon myself and Miss Davenal beside. She says you know all about me, and that's one thing which will make me comfortable here, if there were nothing else, and it's likely there is plenty beside."

Saying which, with shawls and bonnets in her arms, she made a retreat for the little bedroom into which Floy led the way.

Nina played forward the cosiest chair.

"Where will you have it, Miss Davenal, by Nolan's sofa, or mamma's chair? You see our lines extend from one to the other. They are our two points of attraction."

"Supposing I take a midway position, that I may turn from one to the other, at pleasure," replied Miss Davenal, gaily, "and supposing that you, little Miss Nina, have your seat close beside me, that I may watch those nimble fingers at their work. I thought I knew something about embroidery until you taught me to the contrary."

Nina, smiling, drew her work-basket towards her, and sank into the low chair close by.

Miss Davenal produced her work also, a small ivory tatting sheath with a reel of fine cotton, which her swift fingers transformed into little pearl-edged rings.

Bella hesitated a moment or two, and then went on copying music.

"Well to be sure, this is what one may call comfortable," sighed Miss Davenal, presently, in the fulness of her content. "What was Nolan doing!" she asked, glancing roguishly at the book lying beside the invalid.

"Reading aloud," answered Nina; "just finish that poem, Nolan dear."

And Nolan, though his heart was in his mouth, at the great honour and felicity offered him, of reading before her—this radiant woman, who could not have seemed to him more wonderfully lovely and grand had she dropped from the evening star itself—found his voice, and read with intense earnestness and fervour.

And the poem led their conversation out upon diverging tracks, and the earnest discussion which followed made them still more familiar with each other's tone of mind, and range of thought.

And then Mrs. Claxton told them a story of Greyslope, one which her mother had often related to her, a romantic, touching story of one of the dead and gone Lamberts, who had loved a soldier, who was reported slain, and left for dead on a desperate battlefield. And how the true-hearted maiden had refused the solicitations of all other suitors, and had clung devotedly to the memory of her own true knight. And how her blooming cheeks had grown pale, her beautiful eyes dull, and her sweet face pale, as the years slipped on, and though her angry father and her imperious brothers insisted that she should accept some one of her lovers, before her beauty all faded her, the poor fading maiden said no. And then, of a sudden, they changed their entreaties to commands, selected a husband themselves, made ready a wedding-feast, and swore that the family should not be disgraced by an unwedded daughter. And the poor child said never a word beyond her first entreaty to be spared.

And the wedding morning came; the gay attendants, with their garlands of flowers and the bridal robe, went to the maiden's chamber, and behold! she had gone out with another bridegroom, the grim, cold bridegroom of death. There she lay, her hands crossed meekly on her breast, her eyes closed gently, a sweet, peaceful smile on her lips. And on the very morrow, her own true knight arrived home, having escaped from a cruel captivity. And the anguish of the poor lover, learning her fidelity and patience, and the remorse and consternation of the cruel father and brothers, were themes for the minstrel's ballad and the poet's story for years afterwards.

The sweet-faced invalid told it with a winning

abandonment to the spirit of the legend, the words falling low and hushed from her lips, and the youthful listeners scarcely allowed a disturbing breath to hinder the reception of the silvery tones.

"Ah," murmured Miss Davenal, in a tone which betrayed she was hardly aware her thought had found expression, "love is, after all, the crowning flower of life. One who misses it, misses the richest joy. That dead maiden had earned her right to die, which is more than can be said for many of us."

"I would not have died," said Nina, softly.

"I would have defied them, have stolen away," echoed Bella.

At which Nolan laughed.

"You defying, stealing away! Oh, Bella, that is too much. Say rather from pure inertia you would have married the chosen of the kinsmen," said he, banteringly.

"But how would Nina have lived?" questioned Miss Davenal, looking down into the sweet, earnest face bent over the embroidery needle.

"She would have found a dozen ways, I suppose, where no one else would have been able to find, with a microscope, a single one. That is our Nina!" answered Nolan, enthusiastic, as always, in the praise of his twin sister. "When things are desperate, she always has a gift for creeping out at some sly place. I think a fairy was her godmother, and gave her this gift, this precious gift, for an unfortunate family like ours, the knack of making the best out of everything!"

Miss Davenal was deeply touched by the warm glow which shone on Nolan's face while he spoke, and she watched the soft sparkling glance of Nina's blue eyes, as they responded to his loving smile.

A cheerful diversion from the dreamy melancholy, produced by the story, came through Miss Davenal's "Aunt," who, putting on a cambric apron she had kept in a roll under her arm, asked:

"Has anybody any objection to my going into the kitchen and helping about the table? If the good woman there doesn't object to interference, I should like to try my hand again at such things."

Nina laughed, and answered promptly:

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I had so much rather stay here, and I was just thinking I must be going out."

"Leave Aunt and Ruth to settle such sublimary affairs. We will be making 'our feast of reason here,'" interposed Miss Davenal. "Oh, there's some one coming up the steps! I hope it's no one who will spoil our afternoon. Ah! I see, it is Mr. Forsay. He shall be at our feast, Nina, sweet."

She looked down playfully into Nina's face. But the blue eyes were grave, hazed over with a sudden chill it seemed to Miss Davenal.

"Dear Miss Davenal," said Nina, reproachfully, "why do you and Mr. Forsay try to cheat us into believing you were strangers when you met here?"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed that young lady, in utter surprise.

"I imagined—I fancied," began Nina, stammering a little, in her haste to speak before Mr. Forsay's appearance, and Floy was already running to the door to admit him, "say, I am positive, a look of mutual understanding passed between you at the time you were examining the rings, which could hardly have been, had you been strangers."

Miss Davenal flushed a little, and laid her hand down on Nina's shoulder in her earnestness, while she whispered:

"Nina, little one, I am so proud and wilful I don't think there is another person to whom I would explain this thing. But you shall hear the whole—ah, here he comes!—presently, Nina, you shall hear it all."

"Just the desired addition," said Nolan, holding out his hand with a genial, heart-felt smile. "You are to stay with us for supper, and spend the evening here, Mr. Forsay; is he not, dear mother? Speak Nina, Bella! make him promise. Miss Davenal stays, and such a glee club as we'll form to-night will not be often found in these parts. The old roof shall be gay and merry, as the poor old gloomy one of Greyslope has not been for years and years. Say you will stay, Mr. Forsay."

"Certainly, my good fellow, if it be equally desirable to the others present."

"Shall we put it to vote?" asked Nolan, merrily, "ayes, right hand raised! Nays, not one! Are you satisfied?"

Mr. Forsay was satisfied. He went forward, shaking hands with the ladies, and then gently lifting the curtains of the recessed window, sacred to the poor paralytic, he laid a paper of delicate confectionary on the knee of that unfortunate. His observant eye had detected that the poor invalid had a child's fondness for sweetmeats, and it was no small satisfaction for Kent Forsay to be able to contribute even

in such poor, feeble fashion to the better content of this ruined and blasted life.

He thought this little movement unobserved, but there was one eye from whose quiet vigilance it was hopeless for him to think of escaping.

Nina came to him, later in the afternoon, when the others were occupied over Bella's uncompleted music.

"Mr. Forsay, my father cannot thank you with coherent speech, but he has already learned to know your step, and his face brightens the moment you appear. I cannot bear that you should think no one sees your little acts of thoughtful kindness, though I am aware you try to keep them private."

"My dear Miss Nina, don't pain me by alluding to such an absolute trifle. If I could do something, such as I long for, to relieve you and Nolan from this cruel strain upon such tender frames, then I might perhaps allow you to thank me," answered Mr. Forsay, warmly.

"Come hither, trunants," called Miss Davenal's gay voice; "come and tell us if we are equal to this quartette, as the ambitious Miss Claxton insists."

They came with ready willingness. Miss Davenal's hand rested carelessly upon the piano, and just above it lay Kent Forsay's, waiting to turn over the sheets of music. On each glittered the quaint Florentine ring. Nina Claxton's eyes wandered from one to the other, mutely asking of the dumb-gems the hidden meaning which she detected, but could not fathom.

In a little time Mr. Forsay himself was conscious of her glance. He bit his lip, and suddenly slipping the ring from his finger, he dropped it carelessly into his pocket.

Miss Davenal, although her face was averted, had a side glimpse of this little movement.

She turned around suddenly, looking up half resentfully into his face.

"It is a silly superstition," she said, "I wonder so sensible a person as you should heed it."

"You have no faith in it, then?" he asked, serious, and amused at the vexed look of her eyes.

"None at all, or if I have, I defy it!"

"What is it?" asked Bella, impatiently, as she raised her fingers from the piano.

"Only this," replied Miss Davenal, curling her scarlet lip while she turned the ring on her finger. "These rings were made by a poor Italian fanatic, who tried to bind other people to his own wild vagaries. He made them in pairs, and pretended that, when they met a second time, after leaving him, it would be on the fingers of a pair of true lovers."

"Oh, Miss Davenal," exclaimed Bella, "and they did meet here. And you and Mr. Forsay owned them."

"Which goes to prove the fallacy of the superstition," said the lady, pettishly. "I always knew it was folly."

Nina Claxton was looking over the music, and Nolan was whistling softly. As for Kent Forsay, he had turned his face away, so they could none of them read its expression at all.

Bella was provokingly persistent.

"It is so romantic. Dear me! Miss Davenal, I should hardly dare dispute it. What do you think about it, Mr. Forsay?"

"I am not really quite settled enough in my opinion to be able to declare it," answered he, coolly.

"Then you have some faith?" queried Bella.

"I really think I have," he answered, laughing.

At which Miss Davenal arched her neck. "I warn you," she said—between those beautiful white teeth the words came sternly—"I warn you that I defy—I shall resist such faith!"

He smiled again, and bending over her, whispered a single sentence, at which the lady's face broke into a bright, happy glow, and she held out her hand to him eagerly.

Little Nina saw, and in her angelic self-forgetfulness, thought that she had never seen her new friend look so beautiful.

And then came Ruth in high glee, to announce supper, and nothing would do with Mr. Forsay but that he and Ruth should wheel Nolan's couch out to the table. Miss Davenal's "Aunt" showed her aptitude for imitation. Her mistress herself could not have decked the plates more picturesquely with all shades of green leaves than she had done.

"It looks like a banquet for Robin Hood!" said Nina, clapping her hands in delight.

Miss Davenal's basket had produced magical results. There was every delicacy the fastidious mistress could have desired. How sweet and lovely, beyond any beauty of blooming youth, looked Mrs. Claxton with her smooth skin, and that premature snowiness of hair!

It was a scene never to be forgotten. These

young hearts gave themselves up to a genial morriement, which was as enchanting and exhilarating as rare old wine, the more intoxicating perhaps, because it came so seldom to most of them.

The evening was spent with music and happy talk. Nothing seemed to mar the general joy. Only once Nina started nervously, and declared she saw a face, a man's face, evil, threatening, vengeful, pressed against a pane of glass in a window where the curtain was still undrawn.

They convinced her of the foolishness of the idea by throwing up the window. But later, when Kent Forsay was looking for his hat, he started back himself, positive that the light from the lamp in his hand fell upon a face a little beyond, outside the window, a strange face, but not angry or vindictive, only filled with deep emotion and profound yearning grief of some sort or other. He went out, and took a walk around the house, to make sure that, whoever it was, the intruder had gone, and gave Ruth a private caution to look well to her doors and fastenings.

It was just before the happy circle broke up, that Miss Davenal put into Nina's hand the crisp new bank note from Lord Windermere.

"Nina, darling," she said, earnestly, "there is something which was given me by somebody, whom you have never seen and know nothing about, to give away—not in charity, but to someone whom it would brighten and bless. I know no better place than this. Take it, dear, I beg of you, in the spirit with which I offer it, to fulfil his wish."

"Fifty pounds! Oh, Miss Davenal!" said Nina, catching her breath a little sharply, and she stood a moment, with downcast face, revolving the subject. She looked up presently, her blue eyes clear and bright. "Thank you, Miss Davenal. We need it surely, and I think it is right for me to accept it. If I could only show you all it will be to us!" And here her voice broke down.

"You dear, sweet, unselfish darling! There's not another word to be said, except that this has been the happiest, loveliest visit I ever knew. I shall come again to-morrow, or next day. I feel as if I belonged here. How shall I ever tear myself away from the town?"

"Don't do it; you said you would stay as long as you were pleased. Let us keep on trying to please you."

"In which case I might never be able to go. What a charming family you are! Not a single unworthy member," responded the lady, kissing her fondly.

There went a little spasm of pain across Nina's face; the hands lying in Miss Davenal's quivered a moment.

"Ah, if it were only so," faltered she; "dear Miss Davenal, we have one sorrow which we do not show to others, but you deserve our entire confidence. There was another—and he deserted us—he was unworthy—the rightful head of the family too, since my father's helplessness. Oh, that is the bitterest wrong of all that Madame Lambert has wrought, that she ruined our poor Guy!"

"This is entirely unexpected to me," said Miss Davenal, extremely disturbed by Nina's agitation. "It is the last thing I suspected. I would not have spoken so, for the world, if I had dreamed of it."

"We do not talk of it. We cannot bear to think how he has changed, who was once our pride and joy. Oh, Miss Davenal, there is no bitterness in the world so hard to bear as the unworthiness of one you love!" faltered Nina, the tears flowing down her cheeks. "Bella and Nolan have no mercy upon him, but my mother and I often weep together over our sorrow for Guy, though his name is scarcely ever heard in the house."

"Dear child! how many troubles you fight valiantly against! But I am thankful Nolan makes up to you in love and goodness, for all you may miss in another."

"Dear Nolan!" echoed Nina, and, smiling again, she wiped away her tears.

"Dixon has come with the carriage, Miss Davenal," called out that very useful Aunt of hers; "here are your wrappers."

"Will you ride home with us, Mr. Forsay?" asked Miss Davenal.

"Thank you, a little way, at least," replied Mr. Forsay, and, assisting her in, he took his seat beside her.

A group of bright faces watched them from the lighted window.

"Good night. It has been such a charming evening. Good night," was called a dozen times.

And the carriage drove slowly away. They recalled afterwards, with significance, how both of them looked back half wistfully at the house they were leaving.

"After all," said Kent Forsay in a musing voice, "I doubt if there be a family in the kingdom so rich in mutual trust and affection, and that is the greatest happiness, and wealth."

"The very best!" replied Carmine Davenal, earnestly. "I, from the dearth and poverty of my life, can judge correctly concerning it."

"I also was an only child," returned Kent Forsay in a low voice, "but my childhood was tenderly nursed, and my uncle afterwards was like a parent. I cannot tell you how thankful I am the Claxtons have found such a friend in you, Miss Davenal. I mean to do my best, but Madame Lambert has cunningly cramped my hands."

"I shall see them frequently, even though I return to London. I can scarcely explain why I am so attracted towards them, especially to this dear, dear little Nina. We will have another evening like this,—say Tuesday. Will you be there?"

"With pleasure," returned Kent Forsay, promptly.

Ah! who guessed all that Tuesday was to bring to the hapless Claxtons? the terrible trial, the great needs, the utter helplessness, and yet neither Carmine Davenal nor Kent Forsay be at hand, to relieve, comfort, or sustain?

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

BIRCH bark is used in Ireland for tanning bazils. It contains 7 per cent. tanning matter. It is also used in France for making the fine red leather and other fine kinds known as Russian leather.

For tanning purposes the French use the bark of a species of oak known as komes oak, a stunted shrub, growing in the south of France. This species of oak grows in clumps, and to a height of about three feet. The shrub which is called coppice oak has roots of a yellow-brown hue, and is very rich in the tanning principle, and is used in France for tanning sole leather of first quality.

ELM bark is generally used in Norway for making leather, and it is said the fine Norway gloves are prepared from the elm bark, and that the softness and beauty of the leather are attributable to this bark. The white willow is used in Denmark for the leather used in the manufacture of gloves. Russia also uses this bark in the manufacture of fancy leather, the finished leather being impregnated with the oil of birch bark, which gives it a peculiar agreeable smell. It is a noteworthy fact that the Norway tanners used birch and willow in preference to oak bark.

NEW SYSTEMS OF SHIP-BUILDING.

THE Emperor is engaged just now with the Constructor of the Navy in studying a new system of shipbuilding, the details of which are carefully concealed. The model vessel, the *Puebla*, about 20 ft. long, is at St. Denis, and is said to present extraordinary novelties in its build, armour-plating, machinery, and steering apparatus. So strictly is the secret kept that the Emperor visited the vessel the other day, with M. Dupuy de Lôme only, to see it exhibited by the inventor. The report is that the Emperor was perfectly enraptured, and that if future experiments confirm the first impression, a complete transformation will take place in the navy. It is even said that the progress of two vessels now on the stocks at Lorient and Rochefort has been stopped to introduce a part or the whole of the features of this wonderful model. We have not much faith in vague reports of inventions that are close secrets, and in this case simply repeat what we find in print.

Another system of shipbuilding and navigation has also been brought to public notice; it consists, first, in a new form of hull, and, secondly, in being driven upon instead of through the water. This is not the first or second time that the idea of running on the surface of the water has been suggested. One plan of the kind was in our hands at the period of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The inventor of the present system, M. E. Bélégue, has obtained the attention of the Emperor, and the Renard, a despatch boat, has been fitted after the new system, and is said to give wonderful results. Admiral Fiaquet, who presided at an official trial at Toulon, is said to be enthusiastic about the invention. M. Bélégue says that the Renard, a heavy vessel displacing 800 tons, and with engines of only 150 horse-power, did thirteen knots with steam alone, and fourteen with steam and sail, and that with vessels of a different form sixteen, eighteen, or even twenty knots an hour will be attained.

NEW STREET PAVEMENT FOR THE CITY.—The new mode of laying granite pavement was tried recently in Duke-street, Smithfield, in which it will be subjected to the severest test, as the heaviest traffic from the new goods station of the Great Western Railway will pass over it. The plan consists of laying down granite blocks of 6 in. by 4 in. on a simple bed and filling in the interstices with a very coarse

gravel, and then pouring on a very hot or liquefied cement of gas asphalt. This liquefied asphalt runs down between the blocks to the bottom, and firmly cements the whole pavement into one mass, which is thus rendered impervious to water from above or from below; consequently the rain at once runs off, and the bed always remaining dry, no pumping up of mud can occur from between the blocks of granite, so that the pavement always remains clean, and neither mud in wet weather nor dust in dry weather can arise where this mode is adopted. This plan has been tried at the suggestion of Mr. Peddler, who prevailed on the Commissioners of Sewers to lay down a specimen, and judging from its success at Manchester, it is hoped that it will soon also succeed in London.

INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL ILLUMINATION ON THE QUALITY OF THE AIR IN DWELLING HOUSES.

CARBONIC acid gas is known to be very injurious to health, and it is, probably, the prevalent cause of bad air. This gas is constantly generated by the various contrivances for artificial light; but no experiments have, until lately, been made as to the value which this factor of the impurity of air may reach under different circumstances. Dumas states the important fact, that in gas illumination, both the consumption of oxygen and the production of carbonic acid is very considerable.

In 1867, Dr. Zoch, a Hungarian chemist, communicates a series of determinations on the increase of carbonic acid in illuminating a room of a known capacity with gas, kerosene, and rape seed oil. Consumption of the lighting material, time, and intensity of light were self-evidently taken into account. In the following table the reader will find the increase of carbonic acid gas in the three modes of illumination calculated for the space of 100 cubic metres (131 cubic yards), and upon a lighting effect of 10 normal flames (1 normal candle equal a stearine candle of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.), at the time of 1, 2, 3, and 4 hours.

Increase of CO₂ per thousand:

Burning Time.	Kerosene.	Street Gas.	Rape Seed Oil.
1h	0.929	0.708	0.537
2h	1.456	1.342	1.038
3h	1.779	1.518	1.190
4h	1.811	1.562	1.229

From this table it may be seen that rape seed oil illumination generates the smallest amount of carbonic acid gas, and kerosene most. As this mode of illumination is not very general, it is of no great practical importance that kerosene contributes most to vitiate the air, but it is a very different affair with gas illumination. Who has not noticed of late years in the illumination of the houses, theatres, concert and political halls of our great cities the fact that each attempts to rival his neighbour in the glaring effect of gas light, but at the same time who has not also made the observation that the greater the light, the greater the oppressiveness and vitiation of the atmosphere.

It is certain that this sentiment of discomfort is partly to be attributed to the radiant heat emitted by the flames, but the carbonic acid gas is nevertheless to be considered as its chief cause. The normal amount of this gas in the atmosphere is 0.50 to 0.65 per thousand, and an amount of from 2.75 is only to be met with in hospitals, prisons, and garrisons, where the process of respiration of many individuals is going on.

SAFETY IN MINES.—A correspondent, "R. T.," writes—"I beg to suggest that explosions in coal-mines could be prevented by transmitting every moment to all parts of the mine an electric spark, so that dangerous accumulations would be impossible. The usual ventilation would not impede it; rain, &c., would not quench it; the pendulum of the nearest church-clock would transmit an intense spark every moment, night and day, at a very small cost."

A FLYING STEAMER.—Mr. J. K. Smythies, of Paddington, barrister-at-law, proposes to introduce a flying steam-engine, fitted with wings, worked by the action of steam. He reduces the ratio of the weight of the engine to its power by using a tubular boiler with very small and thin tubes. He will use liquid fuel, and carry very little water, condensing the steam by a very light condenser, made, like the tail of a bird, to sustain the bird and steady its flight. The arms of the wings are connected with the piston-rod of the engine, so that the apparatus is raised by the strokes of the wings alone, without light gas, heated air, or other contrivance to give it buoyancy. To this engine he attaches seats for one or more passengers. In the realization of man's dominion over the air, substances combining strength with lightness will, of course, be made use of. Aluminium is likely to be one of these substances; so are fine steel, cane, whalebone, cork, &c.



[PAUL GUSTAVE DORÉ.]

DORÉ AND HIS PICTURES.

Few men have made so deep a mark upon the age as Paul Gustave Doré. Never, perhaps, in the annals of art or literature, has any man risen with such astounding rapidity to the very pinnacle of eminence, and that, too, by the sheer force of a great genius, and a power of working which few possess. As the sun bursts forth through the thick clouds after a storm, glorifying all nature with its refulgence, so Gustave Doré rushed upon the world, disseminating the rays of his powerful genius from east to west, from north to south, astonishing his contemporaries, puzzling art critics, and electrifying the whole civilized community.

Born at Strasburg, in January, 1832, when only thirteen he accompanied his father to Paris to complete his studies at the Charlemagne Lyceum. Even at that age, he displayed a strong love for the art, in which he was afterwards to become so famous. At the age of sixteen, he commenced his career by contributing comic sketches to the French paper *Le Journal pour Rire*, and shortly after he sent drawings to the *Salon*, among which were "*Les Pins Sauvages*," "*Les deux Mères*," and "*La Prairie*," but they attracted little notice, and it was not until 1857, when he exhibited his "*Battle of Inkerman*," that he obtained any mention by art critics. This work, however, called forth some notice, but gave little indication of the massive genius which was so soon to startle the world. It was, however, the stepping-stone to that celebrity he has since gained. He now commenced to work in thorough earnest, to work as very few men can work, contributing several great pictures yearly to the *Salon*, and illustrating books and journals innumerable. The critical world of Paris was taken by storm as work after work, illustrated by Doré, appeared, and picture after picture was hung

in the *Salon*. His industry was incredible—he seemed to possess a magic power of production. It was incomprehensible, so the critics, as critics usually do, began to discover every possible fault with the works of the rising artist. Right and left they attacked him; such speedy execution, said they, must be fatal to art. The colouring, the perspective, or the conception, was faulty; something was always wrong. Doré, like our Turner, had struck out a new path in art, his critics did not understand it, so they abused it.

But Doré was not the man to be frightened from originality into mediocrity by adverse criticism. He pursued manfully his own course, boldly defying his detractors. Not a department of art did he leave untouched, from figure subjects to landscapes, from real life to the imaginative, and in all he has been successful. Doréism spread rapidly throughout Paris, and the works of the young master became the fashionable talk at the *salons*; his pictures were the rage; critics began to speak more guardedly of him; the name of Doré became disseminated throughout the Continent, in England, and in America. Never before had such prolificness and versatility of genius been known. As picture after picture emanated from under his masterly hand, it sold. As fast as the walls of his studio were covered, so were they emptied, and as rapidly replaced. He became one of the wonders of the age, wonderful alone for his rapidity of execution, and great from his versatility of conception. In the latter quality, he may well be compared to Shakespeare, for, like our great dramatist, he delineates every phase of human nature, from the lowest and the meanest, to the highest and grandest; almost Pre-Raphaelite in his detail, he is Turnerian in the grandeur and wildness of many of his conceptions.

Since the year 1854, Gustave Doré, in addition to the numerous paintings he has produced, has illus-

trated "*Rabelais*," "*The Wandering Jew*," Balzac's "*Contes Drolatiques*," the "*Contes de Perrault*," Montaigne's *Essays*, "*Voyage to the Pyrenees*," Dante's "*Inferno*," "*Don Quixote*," "*The Atala*," "*The History of Croquemitaine*," "*The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*," Tennyson's "*Vivion*" and "*Guinevere*," La Fontaine's *Fables*, "*Fairy Realms*," and the Holy Bible, and illustrated them in so profuse a manner, that, apart from the intrinsic merit of the drawings themselves, they prove him possessed of the most gigantic powers of work and industry.

Universal as is the celebrity which Doré has attained, his works have not until within the last two or three years been much known in England. In that short space, however, his name has become almost a household word, and publishers have been vying with each other to produce works illustrated by the great master. A few months ago, three of his largest pictures were brought across the Channel to be exhibited at the Egyptian Hall; and more latterly another exhibition of Doré's paintings has been established at the German Gallery, in New Bond Street, so that now the public need be at no loss to become acquainted with his productions, and can themselves criticise their merits; by the way, it is a somewhat strange fact, that Doré has a much higher opinion of English taste in fine arts, than of that of Frenchmen.

At the Egyptian Hall, there are three colossal paintings, each illustrative of a distinct department of art; Sacred, "*Jephthah's Daughter*"; Poetical, "*Dante Meeting Ugolino in the Frozen Circle*," and Realistic, "*Le Tapis Vert*." All three are grand productions, grand not only in conception, but in execution. Best of the three is decidedly "*Jephthah's Daughter*." It is grandly and harmoniously composed, although, perhaps, the artist has not concentrated his power sufficiently upon the chief figure, to make it stand out from the rest, as purists think it should; but taken in its entirety it is a fine work. The figures are nobly drawn, exhibiting much of that dignified repose which the Italian masters know so well how to throw into their figure subjects, while the glorious sun of early morning bursting out with a magnificent intensity, lighting up the deep sadness of the doomed maiden, produces a scene of unexampled beauty.

Next in point of merit we would class "*Dante meeting Ugolino in the Frozen Circle*." In it we see to perfection the wondrous depth of the artist's imagination, and his great knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame. The almost godlike figure of Virgil contrasts finely with that of Dante shrinking fearfully by his side. The general effect of an Arctic Zone is most skillfully preserved, while the ice appears to be reality itself. There is an awful sublimity in its conception, and a grandeur in its execution which has seldom, if ever, been excelled.

The other picture, "*Le Tapis Vert*, or Life at Baden-Baden," is the largest, but the weakest of the three. It is illustrative of a gaming hall at Baden-Baden, and contains no less than eighty life-size figures; it is of course as different from the others, as black is from white, being realistic in the last degree. In the centre is a green baize table, around which the gamblers are congregated, some sitting, some standing, some greatly excited, others looking on with the greatest nonchalance. It is in the grouping and the facial expression that M. Doré has displayed the greatest skill, for in the position of the table there is an almost ludicrous want of perspective. But in delineating the various evil passions inculcated by the terrible vice of gambling, and written on the faces of that motley crew, the artist has been highly successful. The croupier looking on with an expression which bespeaks entire satisfaction, as far as he himself is concerned, and a half-contemptuous feeling for the poor fools who are wasting their money and intellects around him. The beautiful gametress soliciting him to lend her some money, with which she hopes to win back what she has already lost. The lowly, dark-eyed Jewess hoarding her earnings with a miserly care. The bearded Englishman looking very much indeed like a "fish out of water," and apparently only thinking of the best means to escape. The sharp-looking Yankee, who feels moderately certain he can "lick creakion," but is evidently too wise to play high; the touts, tourists, and Baden-Baden women, all combine to make a most effective picture. The grouping, as we said before, is excellent, and the drapery is magnificent in its richness, graceful foldings, and colouring. All three of these colossal works, although, perhaps, defective in some respects, are paintings of the highest order, and indicative of a portentous genius.

Let us now turn our attention to the German Gallery. Here there is a number of the works of Doré of smaller dimensions, but surpassing in many instances the more colossal pictures in Piccadilly. The leading feature is a grand allegorical subject re-

presenting "The Triumph of Christianity," which is exceedingly sublime in conception, and surpassingly grand in effect. There are two sections—the figure of our Saviour holding a cross, enveloped in a flood of glory encircled by angels, comprises the upper portion. In the lower part Paganism, represented by the heathen gods of Greece, Africa, Asia, Babylon, Assyria, and India, sinks into the lowest depths of oblivion. It is in every respect a masterpiece. The colouring alone of the jewelled ornaments, the gold lace work, the helmets, and the various adornments of the heathen priesthood, is luxuriously gorgeous.

There is also a painting of the "Beggars in a Street at Seville," which is a masterly production, only the beggars are rather more beautiful than it is the fortune of ordinary mortals to meet. Then there are three other Spanish subjects, and several scriptural pieces. The principal of these latter is "Gideon choosing his Soldiers." The story is wonderfully depicted, and the colouring is grand in the extreme.

Then there are two pictures illustrative of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," of the most surpassing beauty. Next to which, perhaps, is "The Vision of Isaiah," (Isiahon in Ruins); although there is one, representing "Monks listening to Mass in a Cathedral," which, perhaps, shows more forcibly than any other the artist's power of depicting the human mind in the face. There are many other works equally deserving of mention. We must content ourselves with having mentioned a few of the most attractive. That Doré is a great master there can be no doubt, and although probably he has, by some critics, been overrated, by others he has been most unfairly judged. Theophile Gautier says, "He is the genius of the age," the "giant of art." Such encomiums are, perhaps, too laudatory, but he is undoubtedly *en sui generis*, and there is no living man who can approach him. To say that Doré is hasty in his conceptions, is utterly wrong. Not a picture is there that has emanated from his prolific brain, but what has been carefully wrought out in his mind before his brush has touched the canvas. He is indefatigable, working at night and in early morning, because he is obliged to receive visitors in the afternoon; he possesses a mind of such proportions that nothing is too large to be embraced by it. He cares not for the world, nor the strictures of its critics; he has struck out a path in art, and placed himself at the head of a new school, and by steady perseverance and a massive genius has obtained the admiration of the world. Loved by his friends, admired even by his rivals, Doré has by his wondrous power of work, the versatility of his genius, his knowledge of delineating the various passions and feelings of the human mind, his depth of thought and power of expression, well earned the title of "The Shakespeare of Art."

MY WILL.—If I possessed the most valuable things in the world, and were about to will them away, the following would be my plan of distribution:—I would will to the whole world, truth and friendship (which are very scarce); I would give to physicians, skill and learning; to clergymen, zeal and distinguished piety; to servants, obedience and honesty; to masters, humanity; to farmers, punctuality and sobriety; to schoolmasters, faithful attention, and ability to teach what they profess; to our colleges, the ablest professors, without regard to birth-place or sect; to mechanics, punctuality and improvement; to the wealthy, charity, humility, politeness, and exercise; to the poor, contentment; to politicians, plain, honest, and candid dealing; to judges, knowledge and impartiality; to the charitable, little parade, and home benefactions; to school-boys, hard study, and politeness to superiors; to school-girls, adornment of the brain, simple dress, and more work; to old bachelors, a love for virtue, children and wives; to old maids, good tempers, little talk, and suitable husbands; to daddies, little or no cash, good sense, and honourable employment; to young ladies, less flummery, more common sense, large waists, and natural feet.—J. T. Y.

IRISH, ENGLISH, AND SCOTCH MASONRY.—In Ireland Masonry is well managed, and placed on a most secure and equitable footing for all the degrees. Although the newest lodge is numbered 1,014, there are not more than 320 lodges under the Grand Lodge of Ireland at present, as the vacancies are due to expelled and extinct lodges, extending over very many years. There are about 90 Royal Arch Chapters, 80 Encampments of Knights Templar, and 9 Rose Croix Chapters. The members are advanced in the degrees according to a certain series of laws, and progressively, so that no Mason can become a Rose Croix until he has passed the chair of a lodge, become a Royal Arch Mason, Mark Master, Knight Templar, used the sword both east and west, and been seven years a Master Mason; hence the de-

grees are prized more than in England or Scotland, because in the latter countries they get them too easily. In all—working under the three Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the British Isles and abroad—there is an aggregate of 2,000 Craft Lodges, 600 Royal Arch Chapters, 120 Mark Lodges (besides the lodges of that degree in connection with 100 Royal Arch Chapters), 160 Knight Templar Encampments, 35 Rose Croix Chapters, 6 Red Cross Conclaves, and 3 Supreme Grand Councils, 33rd degree; making a grand total of 3,000 different branches of the British Masonic family.

THE WITCH FINDER.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE silence of a joy too deep for utterance fell upon Hester and Philip, as their souls thus mingled together. They had attained to a sweeter and sublimer language than that of words—to that delicious communion of hearts which makes every thought a caress, and every glance a greeting.

They had reached the one great stage of life's journey—had ascended the one holy mountain which heaven has placed in time, as a point from which we may survey the beautiful plains of the everlasting.

Forgotten were their past desolations—the dangers still around them—the trials yet to come. What to them were those little darknesses of a day, at the instant when the light of an eternal affection was thus illuminating their spirits with its radiance? Did they not know that all would be well with them? They had won the great victory of human life in winning each other, and from that moment could look calmly upon all their minor battles. They knew—for a sacred instinct had told them—that there could be no night beyond the morning into which their love had thus ushered them; only, at the worst, a few transient shadows.

Heart to heart, they enjoyed, during several minutes, the unspeakable happiness which had taken possession of their whole being.

Silence, too, was around them.

The deserted house in which they had taken refuge—and indeed the whole town of Salem—continued wrapped in a profound repose.

Mr. and Mrs. Waybrook were not yet astir in the room to which they had retired, nor were the old corporal and Mistress Peabody in the kitchen. The bear and tabby were equally quiet, curled up together on the hearth, and sleeping.

The thoughts of Hester, thus reclining in the arms of Philip, soon reverted to their surroundings—their dangers past and present—and she said:

"You must now tell me, dear Philip, the secret of this strange arrival."

"True, it is time for explanation," answered the young navigator. "I see by your earnest face that you desire me to tell my story first, and I obey your wishes, even before you have time to declare them. Does not that prove to you that I will be a good husband?"

"Dear, dear Philip! I know by a thousand proofs that you are everything good and noble, and that, as your wife, I shall be perfectly happy. But tell me all that has occurred during your absence."

"I will be brief," pursued Philip, "beginning at the commencement. The voyage to England was pleasant, as a whole, although we had some rough weather. The only incident of the passage was the ordinary one of a man overboard."

"He was saved, Philip?"

"Yes, or I should not be here, seeing that I am the man in question."

"You, Philip?" and her loving heart could not endure the thought without a thrill of pain. "How did you get overboard? Tell me how it happened."

"It didn't happen at all," declared he, inasmuch as there was nothing accidental about it. "It was a positive attempt upon my life!"

The maiden paled at this declaration.

"It is all over now," he pursued, reassuringly, "and you need not give a second thought to it. You see that I am unharmed, safe and sound by your side, and I am perfectly convinced that a sure protection has been constantly around me. Because you are such a good little soul, Hester, and because I am dear to you, a bountiful heaven has brought me safely back to you!"

"Oh, Philip, what a gladdening assurance!"

She kissed him tenderly, delighted at the importance he gave her, and nestled closer to his bosom.

"Early one morning," continued Philip, "about a week after our departure from Salem, I was called on deck by a sudden squall, it being a principle with me to take the lead on such occasions, and to see with my own eyes that everything was done exactly as it should be. The second mate, a fellow named Ruell, whose

watch it was, passed and repassed me frequently in the discharge of his duties, before we got our sails reefed, our course straightened, and everything to my liking. At last, while I was standing on the larboard quarter, near the bulwarks, bestowing a parting glance upon the sky, this man, taking advantage of a heavier roll than usual, threw himself headlong against me, with such force that I was hurled overboard."

Hester could not refrain from an exclamation of terror at the thought of her lover's peril, thus plunged into the ocean, under the cover of darkness, but she controlled her emotions, and Philip proceeded:

"I had just time enough, before I reached the water, to utter a loud cry, and that was all. Fortunately, however, your father, Hester, disturbed by the rolling and pitching of the ship, came up the companion-way at that very minute to take a look at the weather. He heard my cry, and it is right to say that we were equally active—I in the midst of the waves, swimming for life, and he giving his orders to the watch. Luckily, the old tar at the wheel had acted promptly, putting the ship about, and after a few such minutes as I don't wish to see again, I was taken aboard of the ship."

"And Ruell, the second mate?"

"Oh, he declared his agency in the matter wholly accidental, and cried and protested in such an energetic manner, that I allowed him to think that I believed him, although I could not resist the conviction that he had only planned my destruction. I said nothing of this conviction, however, for the subject was sufficiently dark and mysterious, as it then stood, and we pursued our voyage without farther incident, for I took good care not to permit any more accidents of that nature."

The interest of Hester in the explanations of her lover was now strongly awakened, for she at once connected this deadly assault with the declarations the Witch Finder had made to her and Mrs. Waybrook the previous evening, namely, that the father and lover would never return to Salem.

"Go on, Philip," she murmured; "I think I have a clue to Ruell's conduct."

"You do? I should not wonder an atom, for when a true little woman like you gets her eyes opened by love, she knows most everything. We were delayed in Liverpool a couple of weeks by the non-arrival of a company of emigrants, which had engaged passage with us, and our time grew heavy upon our hands, such was your father's impatience, and mine, to see a certain mother and daughter who lived in a place called Salem. To make the time pass quicker, we went ashore almost every evening, and took long strolls through the streets of the city. On one of these occasions, when we were returning to the ship, rather late in the evening, we were suddenly attacked by a number of ruffians, with daggers and bludgeons, who seemed bent upon killing me. Contrary to my usual custom, I was armed that evening with pistols, besides carrying a stout hickory staff, and at the first sign of peril I used these weapons with an energy that astonished the assailants immensely. As quick as thought one of them was down, with a fatal pistol shot, and a second soon kept the first company, with a terrible blow on the head from my cudgel, after which I grappled with the third, and chief enemy, who proved to be our second mate, Ruell. I recognized him distinctly, calling him by name, whereupon he directed all his energies to flight, and succeeded in tearing himself away and escaping, leaving half of his jacket in my hands."

"Ruell, again?" murmured Hester, thoughtfully.

"He was hired, then, to make away with you?"

"It would seem so," declared Philip; "for his second attempt upon my life left no doubts as to the character of the first. But by whom could he have been hired, and what object was my death destined to favour?"

"I will tell you, dear Philip, after I have heard the rest of your adventures. I know now that your second mate was hired by Boardbush to kill you—"

"Boardbush? That's the name uttered by the judge's niece, with such sinister emphasis, while I was pretending to be unconscious—as you shall soon hear—and now you tell me that he engaged Ruell to kill me. How strange!"

"And yet how simple, when we get at the motive of all these proceedings. I am sure that Ruell was hired to assassinate you, from what Boardbush said to us last evening. He declared that the Harbinger would never return to Salem; that you and my father, with all the passengers and crew, were at the bottom of the ocean, and betrayed such a firm conviction of some dreadful calamity, that his connection with Ruell is perfectly established in my mind from this moment. But go on with your explanations. You escaped from this second attempt without injury."

"Yes. We each received, your father and I, a flesh wound or two, but nothing worthy of mention. We caused a search to be made for Buell, of course, but it was fruitless, and we saw and heard nothing more of him. We learned from his wounded ruffian, however, that they had been hired by him to assist in killing me, and their testimony establishes that fact beyond cavil or question. We did not return to the ship, of course, and we sailed a few days after the occurrence, with a fine breeze, and fair weather, a rich cargo, and a hundred and fifty-one passengers, to which were added two small colonists after our departure!"

"And thus far, all was well," commented Hester, with a long breath, expressive of relief. "You must have been crowded, however, so many of you in your little ship."

"Little ship?" echoed the young navigator, emphatically. "Why, the Harbinger is one of the biggest ships afloat—over five hundred tons burden. Besides, men and women pack at sea as readily as herrings—in separate boxes, be it understood, unless they are married. The return voyage, therefore, was delightful, every hour and minute bringing me nearer to a little lady of my acquaintance, until we reached the banks of Newfoundland, where——"

"You ran aground?"

"Ran aground?"

"Yes, upon the banks you know."

"No, we didn't, for the simple reason that the said banks are from two hundred to a thousand feet below the surface of the water. All continued favourable, therefore, till we struck the banks——"

"There! I knew it! You have let out the secret accidentally. You ran upon them."

Philip laughed merrily.

"I fine you two kisses for your ignorance of nautical matters, and shall collect the same immediately!"

The claim was laughingly paid.

"When we sailors say struck," he then explained, "we mean reached, and so, as I was saying, when we struck or reached the banks of Newfoundland, we were assailed by westerly gales and the thickest kind of fog, a week in succession. The weather was so thick—so cloudy and stormy, I mean—during five successive days that I could not look through any glass during the time mentioned, and was obliged to run by dead-reckoning——"

"Dead-reckoning? What's that?"

"Well, it's really a lively kind of cyphering, an extensive combination of figures—just such an array as you will have to write down, whenever you attempt to cypher out how much I love you! I shaped my course, therefore, towards a very pleasant light that I saw in this direction, and guided myself, as I said, by dead-reckoning, by soundings, and by guess-work generally, the more especially as our charts are faulty, putting down the land where there isn't any, and vice versa. I suppose I need not go into all the details of our foundering in the waters of Nova Scotia, which have not yet been half-explored, and which are twisted into all manners of shapes by the Gulf Stream. Suffice it to say that we got out of our true course considerably, and at length——"

"I see," breathed the maiden, with subdued excitement. "The Harbinger is lost!"

"Yes, about as much as I am," rejoined the young navigator. "You must not jump at these terrible conclusions. The Harbinger represents, with her cargo, about half the wealth of your father and his partner, and every shilling of mine. You must be careful, therefore, how you dispose of the ship and its contents!"

"Thank heaven! She is safe then? But where is she?"

"I was gradually working things up to the point of telling you—ashore upon a little sand-bar off the coast of Nova Scotia!"

"Ashore, Philip? How dreadful!"

"That depends. In all accidents of this kind, everything depends upon how you go ashore, and where, and under what circumstances. If you go ashore in a gale, upon a rocky coast, your ship goes to pieces in a few minutes, and it is a lucky chance if you get safely to the land. On the other hand, if you get aground upon a soft beach, in fine weather and at low tide, you can lie there at your ease until the water rises, and then go on your way rejoicing. You see, therefore, that the fact of going ashore is not terrible in itself, under some circumstances—especially when a man goes ashore into the presence of a precious little lady who loves him!"

He bent forward and snatched a kiss from the rosy lips so temptingly presented near him.

"All is well, I see," murmured Hester.

"Yes, and all has been well with us," rejoined Philip, "ever since you thought enough of us to render it worth saving! The Harbinger is ashore, to be sure, but she is in no danger of going to pieces if the weather continue favourable. She went

ashore upon loose sand, instead of rocks, and did not strain a single timber, which was fortunate. She went ashore at full tide, so that she was left high and dry out of water when the tide retreated, which was unfortunate. Tremendous tides we have along those shores—twenty feet or more, particularly in the Bay of Fundy. The wind was light and the sea calm, at the moment of our accident; good again. The loose sand, however, was washed around the ship in such tremendous quantities when the tide came in, that we couldn't get her off at high water—bad again. And such was our situation—a compound of good, bad, and indifferent."

"The passengers were frightened, of course?"

"Yes, during the first few hours. The ship is safe, however, and so is her cargo, not a particle of it having been damaged. Not a life has been lost, or the least injury occasioned to any of the passengers. A portion of them had gone ashore, when your father and I left, and were chasing sand rabbits on the beach, with the intention of living on game in our absence. As to your father and I, we concluded to fit up one of the ship's boats for the voyage, and come on to Salem. Our object is to return with a vessel into which to transfer a portion of our cargo. The Harbinger thus lightened and assisted, we expect to carry out anchors, and warp her off from the sand-bar into deep water, after which we can all come home gloriously together."

"But how did you get so far out of your proper latitude?"

"Well, to give you all the particulars bearing upon that point would lengthen the account immensely. The thick weather, the impossibility of observations, the double faults of our soundings, and of those marked upon our charts, the ignorance in which we are of many of the difficulties of those waters, the unknown currents——"

"Goodness! you need not explain any farther," interrupted Hester, in astonishment; "I should think you would never venture to cross the ocean again in the face of all these perils!"

"Well, we should not dare to do so," rejoined Philip, "were it not that we have such angels at home to repay us for our trouble."

"And your voyage home in the boat," she added; "was it not terrible?"

"A serious business, I tell you, especially the landing on our arrival. I became quite unconscious, and in that condition was found by the judge's niece, who carried me to her room, and called the old corporal to put me to bed. She evidently regarded me as a bit of desirable fruit, fresh from the tree of life, and thrown into her hands for her own use, for she endeavoured to drug me with some poisoned punch, and would have succeeded, if I had not suspected her purpose, and flung the liquid into the ashes. Her object was to keep me in her clutches. She afterwards dragged me to the cabin of old Lettie, where I saw and heard things of a most horrible nature, and where I thought I should die or go crazy. But Bruno suddenly came bounding through a window, having scented me, and relieved me from my dreadful situation. The rest is known to you."

These explanations had been given in such a pleasant manner that Hester had not remarked their length, but she could not close the eyes of her mind to the stern facts which had been revealed to her.

"From this account," she murmured, "it seems that you and father must return forthwith to Nova Scotia to set the Harbinger afloat, and bring her passengers safely to Salem?"

"Yes, darling, such is at once our purpose and our duty. I know that you are as brave as you are gentle, and that you will endure this new separation with all patience. The ship, her passengers and crew, her cargo—all the great interests of so many lives and so much money, depend upon our speedy return to the scene of the accident. Thank heaven! this sad necessity will never arise again, dear Hester, if we are successful."

"When must you go?"

"Not later than to-night if we can procure a ship. All these are matters which we must consider and discuss together."

The maiden was silent, but not dismayed at the prospect of another and speedy separation from her lover.

She had at once the sense to comprehend the sad necessity in the case, and the courage to meet it as became a true woman.

"And now, darling," continued Philip, "tell me the secret of all the mysteries I have seen and heard around me since my return to Salem. I went to bed last night at your command, without any explanation, because I was very tired, and we needed to secure strength for the work before us; but I am none the less anxious to learn what the judge's niece meant by her strange speeches; what is the danger menacing you and your mother; why we

came to this house, and all the startling features of our situation?"

"I will tell you all," responded Hester, with a sigh, "but you must be strong-hearted. You remember the case of the Parris children, which occurred just before you left us?"

"The Parris children?" repeated Philip. "They were said to be bewitched, and a time was appointed in March for a general prayer in their behalf on the part of several clergymen. Is that the case you refer to?"

"Yes. After the prayer meeting in question, the children accused Rebecca Nurse of tormenting them, and she was arrested as a witch. Her sister, Sarah Galloyce, was soon in prison with her. A general excitement on the subject of witchcraft was thus inaugurated, and you must now be pained and astonished, dear Philip, with an account of one of the most terrible calamities that ever afflicted a people or community."

Beginning thus, Hester told the young navigator all that had occurred in Salem since his departure, narrating the origin and progress of the witchcraft excitement (substantially as the reader will find it recorded by any of our popular historians), and describing the sufferings of the victims, the crimes and cruelties of the witch hunters, the persecutions she had herself endured from Boardbush, and all the features of the monstrous delusions. The amazement with which Philip listened to these revelations can be imagined.

"Your old friends Mr. and Mrs. Rogers were among the first victims," said Hester, by way of conclusion. "They were always kind and good, you know, and early aroused the wrath of Boardbush and the other witch hunters by ministering to the accused, finally falling victims to their very virtues. They left this house and their other property to Mr. Trueaxe, having no children or other relatives, and he has allowed me to make it a hiding-place for various fugitives on different occasions. The windows, as you see, have been covered with blankets on the inside, so as to prevent the witch hunters from knowing when any one is in the house, and it was hither that my thoughts naturally turned last night, as to a place of temporary rest and shelter."

"But how does it happen," asked Philip, "that you and your mother have been accused of being witches?"

"It's the result of a conspiracy between Temperance Stoughton and the Witch Finder. This man has fairly persecuted me ever since you left us, forcing his suit upon me, and refusing to take a negative answer. It finally occurred to him, from all that I can learn, that he might try to scare me into the acceptance of his offers of marriage, by causing the judge's niece to accuse me of tormenting her——"

"The shameless creature!" exclaimed Philip. "I saw her stick the pins into herself!"

He related the scene he had witnessed in the cabin of Lettie.

"Is it possible that a woman can be so cruel and wicked?" commented the maiden. "A more horrible iniquity was never witnessed!"

"All you have told me—all that I have seen," declared Philip, "has the aspect of a monstrous dream. I find it difficult to credit the evidence of my own senses!"

(To be continued.)

FANS.—Though it may sound extraordinary to talk of a soldier with a fan, yet the use of that article is so general in Japan, that no respectable man is to be seen without one. The fans are a foot long, and sometimes serve for parasols; at others, instead of memorandum book. They are adorned with paintings of landscapes, birds, flowers, or ingenious sentences. Upon their journeys they make use of a fan which has the roads printed upon it, and tells them how many miles they have to travel, what inns they are to go to, and what price victuals are at. The etiquette to be observed in regard to the fan requires profound study and close attention. At feasts and ceremonies the fan is always stuck in the girdle, behind the sabre, with the handle downwards.

CONCERNING SERMONS.—There is a deal of pulpit preparation and pulpit performance, "word upon word, line upon line," page upon page; and yet measuring the great mass of preaching, there is scarcely anything the people buy and pay for that so effervesces. How few persons of the congregation can remember even the text of sermons. "Oh, we had such a b-e-a-u-tiful sermon this morning—it was splen-did." "Ah! glad to hear it; what was the subject?" "W-e-l-l, w-h-y, the subject? W-h-y, w-e-l-l, now I declare, let me see—the subject? What's this the text was?—now, really, what makes me so forgetful? I am sure I thought I could re-

member that—but it has slipped my mind." And that's the way it goes. Sermons are generally so oily they slip the people's minds. Why not rough them a little—make them raspy—so that somebody will be rubbed against the grain, stirred up, tendered, so impressed, that at least the text and theme and leading thoughts and points may be remembered.

MARGARET.

CHAPTER III.

MARGARET ROTHSAY reigned, like a star in the gay world. Her own predilections would have confined her closely to home, but her husband was proud of her beauty and grace, and was jealous in exacting admiration from others in behalf of his wife. Abroad, Margaret received his attentions as a matter of course; at home she was like a stranger to him. She never spoke his name in a tender voice, or came willingly to his side to rest her head on his shoulder. Every summer she went to Willow Hall, and passed a couple of months with her father, who was fast growing old and infirm. His weight of years was not so great, but some secret grief consumed him, and made him gray-haired before his time. And Margaret, possessing the key to this secret, watched him very tenderly while she was with him, and the old man's heart seemed to cling to her, with more than the trust of a child for his mother.

He died very quietly at last, sitting at an open window, his hand on his daughter's head, and a copy of the Bible lying unclosed upon his knee. His countenance was peaceful and calm: after the strife and toil, rest had come.

And when he was laid by the side of his wife, and the green turf was folded over his breast, Margaret turned away from the hallowed spot, feeling as if all of life was lost.

The last hope and flower of her existence had perished.

Mr. Rothsay entered his wife's boudoir one bright morning in September, about four years after their marriage.

"Margaret," he said, taking a seat near her, "my son is coming home to-morrow. He will be here in the Europa, which was spoken but a few miles out last night. I want you to look your best, for he has been travelling so long, and has seen so many beautiful women, that it will surprise him to find that the loveliest of them all graces the home of his boyhood."

Margaret had often heard this son alluded to; she knew that Mr. Rothsay had been wedded before she had seen him, and that one child, a son, had blessed the union; but she had never felt sufficient curiosity in the man whose wife she was, to make any inquiries touching these near relatives.

Now she said, just glancing up from her embroidery:

"I will obey you, Mr. Rothsay, to the best of my ability."

The coldness of her tone and the indifference of her manner struck a pang to Mr. Rothsay's heart.

"Oh, Margaret, my wife!" he exclaimed, passionately, "when will you ever begin to love me? This mighty passion which you have awakened in me, thrown back upon itself, is wearing my life away!"

"You made your choice," she replied, coldly. "Did I not promise, in the very hour of our unrighteous betrothal, to loathe you until my dying day? You forced a happy girl from her happiness—by the power of the affection which she bore her only remaining parent—and made her that most wretched and miserable of all objects—the wife whose heart is not given to her husband! Oh, a thousand times rather would I love, and meet no return, than be united for life to the object of my total indifference!"

"Margaret! Oh, Margaret!" he cried, with agony, "spare me. I acknowledge all. But I loved you so, and I had loved before!"

She had a woman's heart, and the bitter suffering of this man touched her. She laid her hand on his.

"Kirk, my husband, heaven knows what is best! Accept your fate as I do mine—with calmness."

He caught her passionately to his bosom.

"Oh, Margaret, to think how you might love! It maddens me!"

She drew herself from his embrace, folded up her work, and left the room.

Mr. Rothsay presented the tall, handsome man and the beautiful woman to each other, with a touch of pride in his bearing. The trio stood together in the elegant room of Mr. Rothsay's home, with the crimson light of a fading sunset flushing and paling around them. Mrs. Rothsay was clad in a robe of snowy muslin, her white neck and arms encircled with pearls, and a single spray of the same pure jewels

glittering amid the brightness of her hair. Her small, white hand clutched convulsively for support the carved back of a chair, and her face changed to an ashy paleness as the young man's fingers lightly touched hers. Those fingers were like ice, and they met their like—all the warmth and vitality were frozen out of their lives! For in the son of her husband Mrs. Rothsay had recognized the stranger, and in the woman whom he must call "mother," Horace knew the being who had for years filled the one holy place in his heart! He forgot that his conduct would seem strange to his father; he forgot the congratulations which he owed them both, the nearest kindred that he claimed on earth, and he stood gazing at Mrs. Rothsay in blank amazement.

"My son Horace, dear Margaret; my wife, Horace."

The summons to tea was a relief. Mr. Rothsay led the way, directing Horace to follow with Mrs. Rothsay, for he was very anxious to perpetuate the existence of good-will between his son and his wife. Horace advanced and offered her his arm. She touched it, withdrew her hand quickly, and walked by his side. The meal was a silent one. Horace ate nothing; Margaret sat behind the silver tea-equipage pale and rigid; and Mr. Rothsay, pained and disconcerted, could only explain the constraint of the others by supposing that Horace and Margaret had conceived for each other a mutual dislike. This supposition was confirmed when, later in the evening, Margaret excused herself on the plea of fatigue, and Horace remarked to his father, when they were left alone, that he thought of quitting England almost immediately. He had been abroad the greater part of his life since early youth, he said, and English manners and customs were not to his taste. He might go to Asia, to Australia, to Africa—he had not decided.

Mr. Rothsay would have reasoned with him, but Horace waved all argument with an impatience wholly foreign to his nature; his fortune was in his own hands, and he was justified in doing what would best insure his happiness. So his father gave up the idea of influencing him to remain, and at an early hour the two so long severed, separated with a simple good-night.

Mr. Rothsay pored over private papers in his library till long after midnight; Margaret prayed anxiously for strength in this fresh trial; Horace Rothsay paced his chamber till the gray dawn, for now his love for Margaret was doubly unholy, and it must be renounced at the price of even life and reason.

A week passed. Horace could trust himself no longer in her presence—it was a needless pain to them both. The contact was dangerous. He feared for his own resolves; he distrusted his own good intentions. He longed inexpressibly to fly with her to some remote corner of the earth, away from all human companionship, where they could live only for each other! And lest the expression of this yearning should betray itself in words, and he thus be rendered an object of her detestation, he was anxious to quit the place where she drew breath—even the land that had given her birth.

And at the expiration of a week his luggage, strapped and corded, blocked the front hall of Rothsay House, and his name was entered on the books of a steamer ready to sail for California. He said good-bye to his father at the house, declining the latter's proposal to attend him to the wharf. But Margaret was invisible, she had given orders not to be disturbed, old Katy said.

Horace's trunks were consigned to the care of the trusty coachman, but he himself preferred walking. He left the house by the garden path, for something told him that thither Margaret had flown, to avoid the trial of parting with him before her husband, and in this supposition he was not mistaken. The flutter of her white robe from behind the sombre shadow of an aloe tree betrayed her whereabouts, and Horace could not resist the temptation to look upon her face once more.

She felt ill and faint at the sight of him, her head turned giddy—she sank back against a fretting-work, and consciousness deserted her.

Horace caught her in his arms and carried her to the marble basin, which was fed by an ornamental fountain, where he bathed her forehead and hands in water, and held the cooling liquid to her parched lips.

When he saw signs of returning consciousness he laid her gently down on the soft turf, pressed the drapery which covered her arm to his lips, and, with the speed of an escaped criminal, fled from the spot. A few hours later he stood on the deck of the steamer, taking a parting look at England.

CHAPTER IV.

THEY brought him home to her pale and bleeding. A collision on one of the railways had taken place, and Kirk Rothsay had been a passenger on the

doomed train. He was returning home from a business tour, eager to behold his wife again, eager to make yet another effort to win her love. He had purchased for her a set of splendid diamonds—they were taken crushed from the breast-pocket of his coat after the fatal catastrophe. And Margaret, sitting quietly sewing by her window that sunny afternoon, was shocked, nay stunned, by the spectacle of those solemn-faced men, and the dismal burden which they bore.

Up to his own lofty chamber they carried him—this man whose great wealth was powerless to save him from destruction, to whom all the honours and treasures of this world were as naught to one little hour of life! For hours he lay in a stupor from which it was feared he would never awake, but towards morning he stirred feebly, and uttered the name of Margaret. She was by his side in an instant. All the dislike, all the scorn, which she had felt for him were swept away by the appeal which his helplessness and suffering made to her sympathy. He was powerless and distressed. It was enough; she forgave him freely the blight which he had brought upon her life. He reached out his trembling hand—she placed hers within the uncertain grasp.

"My poor child! My dear Margaret!" he said, pitiably. "I have been the bane of your existence! I clouded your life's morning, and turned your joy into bitterness! But oh, Margaret, I loved you so! Heaven forgive me!"

"Even as I do, fully and entirely, Kirk, my husband, whom I no longer hate!" she exclaimed, with fervour, putting back the moist hair that strayed down from his forehead.

"Thanks! thanks! And, Margaret, the boy, Horace, you will be kind to him for my sake, and because he has been grievously wronged—he has no mother—no—no—"

His voice grew thick and husky—he motioned for water. Margaret held a cordial to his lips, but the stern lethargy of death was coming on.

"Margaret," he gasped, "I have done him injustice—in the confession it is all explained—seek for it in the—the—old—"

He struggled desperately to proceed, but his strength was gone for ever; his wild, dying eyes sought the face of his wife with piteous desire, but she failed to read their mute but touching language. The imploring expression of those ghastly orbs faded out; there was a slight shudder as if from the thrill of approaching cold, a convulsive grasping after the hand which still lay in his, a quickly drawn breath, and Kirk Rothsay was dead.

And over his cold remains the fountain of tears so long sealed was drawn dry, for Margaret, though she had never loved, could not forget the memory of the kindness that she had ever received from her husband. He had been gentle and patient with her fierce, unloving words; he had tried hard to merit, if he could not gain, her love; and now she recalled his goodness towards her, with emotions of tearful gratitude.

Kirk Rothsay was laid in a costly tomb, and after the performance of the last rites due to mortality, the will of the deceased was opened and read by Mr. Grantley, his confidential attorney. It was very simple in its tenour, and subject to no legal quibbles. He bequeathed one half of his estate to his beloved wife Margaret; the remaining half to his son, Horace Rothsay, together with his parental blessing. The house in town was to be the inheritance of Horace, because the childhood of his son had been passed there; High Rock was given to Margaret.

The latest intelligence which had been received of Horace Rothsay, informed his friends that he was located in San Francisco, as an artist—a portrait painter—it was his particular crotchet just then—and to San Francisco, accordingly, Mr. Grantley directed his letter, informing the young adventurer of his father's death, and his own accession to a splendid fortune.

The epistle reached Horace, for by the return of the mail packet Mr. Grantley received an answer. He was to take sole charge of the Rothsay estate, so far as Horace's heritage was concerned, and do with it as he thought best. Mrs. Rothsay was to be left free to reside at Rothsay House if she chose, and also she might consider herself at liberty to claim any of the personal property appertaining to the said house, if she purposed making her home elsewhere.

How deeply Margaret's heart thanked Horace Rothsay for his interest in her welfare none could have guessed who saw her cold impassive face and indifferent attention when the letter was read to her. But every word was a balm of healing and a sweet solace! Convinced, as Margaret was, that her husband had died with the weight of some unrevealed secret upon his mind, the particulars of which he had probably written out and consigned to some hidden nook, but which he would have given her instructions to discover had his strength lasted, she

caused every remote spot in the great house to be ransacked and thoroughly overhauled. But the search availed nothing, and she was obliged to rest content in her ignorance of something which she felt she, of all others, ought to know.

Early in June she took up her residence for the summer at High Rock. Here she remained until November, when, having succeeded in arranging her affairs satisfactorily, and letting the cottage to a desirable tenant, she packed up her "household goods," and removed to Willow Hall, where she hoped to end her days in peace. Amid the old familiar scenes much of the bloom and beauty of her girlhood came back to her.

In the years which had passed like a dark dream, she had grown paler and more sad, but the gay carelessness of youth was replaced by the sweet grace which beams upon the countenance of those who, through much suffering, have been made strong.

Unmarked by any incident of note, a quiet year passed by.

CHAPTER V.

As might have been expected, Margaret Rothsay, young, wealthy and beautiful, was not without suitors and some real lovers.

But she gave encouragement to none. She should never marry again, she said; her path through life must be trodden alone.

And, disheartened by her coldness, one by one they dropped away, and left her to herself and the solitude she craved.

One damp, uncomfortable day, about eighteen months after her husband's death, Margaret, restless and uneasy, wandered around the great lonesome house, seeking some means by which to occupy her disturbed attention until bedtime.

Rainy days had for her a faculty of promoting the empire of unrest, and of dissipating what little peace the sunshiny hours, which are full of golden prayers and benisons of content, had given her.

She ascended to the library and arranged the books, turned over the long-unused writing implements on the table, and cast many a sidelong glance at the crape-covered portrait.

She had never looked upon the face it represented, and now she had not the courage requisite to tear away the veil which the hand of the dead had placed there.

With an audible sigh of loneliness and discontent she closed the library door behind her and ascended to her own chamber. It was furnished precisely as it had been in her girlhood, except that in a corner stood an ancient carved escritoire, which had formed a part of the study furniture at High Rock. For the sake of its antiquity, Margaret had fancied it, and since its advent at Willow Hall, it had served her for a bureau. Now she bethought herself that its drawers required arranging, and when would a better time than the present occur? She would set about the task at once.

By some mismanagement of the upper drawer, it slipped from its grooves, and fell to the floor with a crash. Stooping to pick it up, Margaret saw that the concussion had opened a private compartment in the back of the drawer, which had evidently been kept shut by a secret spring; and, moreover, the shock had dislodged from its snug concealment a heavy package of manuscript. She seized upon this with eager haste, for she had no doubt that it was the identical document which she had so long and unsuccessfully sought. It was carefully sealed, and bore this superscription, in Kirke Rothsay's handwriting:

"A HISTORY AND A CONFESSION
To my well-beloved Wife Margaret, and my Son
Horace."

Without hesitation, Margaret broke the seals and read the contents:

"Having a premonition that I, Kirke Rothsay, shall be called hence before my wife or my son, I wish to leave to these beloved friends a brief history of my life, and also a confession of my misdeeds. I deem myself but doing justice to those whose fate was interwoven with mine, and particularly in this, as an act of justice to Carl Hathaway, who was once my friend.

"I was born in—shire, of parents titled but poor; the fortunes of our family were fallen, and the old castle, which was entailed, and a few acres of heath, constituted the sole possessions of the Rothsays. By dint of much pinching in the household arrangements, I was educated at Oxford, for my father could not give up the idea that all gentlemen must pass the ordeal of this honoured university. At college I became acquainted with Carl Hathaway, who, though somewhat older than myself, was still a jovial companion. He was not of the nobility, but his father was very wealthy, and the family moved

in the highest circles; for gold is a patent of respectability, even in aristocratic and exclusive England.

"I do not think that I was naturally either cruel or vindictive, but my passions, when once roused, were violent, and I was not much held in check by scruples of conscience. I liked Hathaway at first, and we were what the world calls friends; but by-and-bye he began to stand between me and the honours of Oxford. If he had but been away I should have carried off the palm of victory at the annual examination, and from the fact that he was a plebeian and a patrician, it was peculiarly humiliating that he should triumph over me. But whatever mortification I felt was necessarily concealed, though a thirst for petty revenge rankled in my breast.

"About the same time Hathaway and I both fell in love, but with totally different objects. He, a sober man of twenty-eight, was enamoured of Lady Margaret Earle, a pale lily-flower, of high birth and some fortune. But her troth was plighted to Arthur, Lord of Eltham, a fine young man of her own rank and station, and Hathaway's ardent suit met with ill success. Her heart was Eltham's, and she had no room there for another love. But still Hathaway did not crush out his fatal passion; it raged in his breast like a volcanic fire, and devoured all the social attributes of his character. He grew morose and silent, avoided company, and took long walks over the barren heath to the sea-coast.

"My affections were bestowed on a beautiful girl, the daughter of a neighbouring lord's gamekeeper, and unluckily for me, Undine Grey was a coquette. She had fine tastes and pure thoughts, but there was an inordinate love of flattery, and of the pride and pomp of circumstances in her girlish breast. She led me like a will-o'-the-wisp, and then I was content to follow her. I was a mere boy of nineteen, and I thought that without Undine I should have no joy in life! Well, I offered myself to Undine; I knelt to her and vowed many a vow that she was more to me than the whole world, and she—she laughed in my face. I was a good fellow, she said, patting me as though I had been a favourite hound, but she was already engaged to marry the Duke of Hazelwood. She was sorry for me, but she had much rather be a duchess than a mere Honourable's lady, and she begged to bid me farewell. I left her presence, all that was evil in me rampant and raging, because of her senseless taunt; for I was young then, and very poor, and could not brook any allusion to my poverty. And in the heat of the moment I swore solemnly that I would be avenged on the proud Undine. For a long time no opportunity offered; she was wedded to the noble duke, and the pair were travelling on the Continent, but my vengeance would keep.

"In the meantime Carl Hathaway was consumed with his passion for Lady Margaret, but, of course, he was hopeless, for every thought of hers was given to Lord Eltham. And strangely enough, the fortunate lover took a great deal of interest in the rejected suitor of Margaret, and at every opportunity he sought his society, and endeavoured by his delicate attentions to win Hathaway's friendship. Lord Eltham was a noble-hearted, generous young man, and his feeling heart was disturbed by the distress of his less fortunate rival. Hathaway could not well be otherwise than civil to the young lord, but in his secret soul he hated him, for were it not for him, Lady Margaret might gladden his own hearthstone. This was but a natural feeling, and Lord Eltham should have known that no good could come, by trying to conciliate a rejected lover of Hathaway's hot temperament.

"The Earle family had a castle on the Cornish coast, and thither they went once in half a dozen years to pass the summer months. The present season was to be passed in this manner, and among the guests invited to make up a social party were Carl Hathaway, Eltham and myself. Besides, there were a dozen more, mostly of the nobility, ladies and gentlemen. Hathaway could not live away from Lady Margaret, and of course he accepted the invitation to follow her to the 'Eagle's Nest,' as the castle was called, the moment it was given. Eltham was soon to become one of the family, and travelled in their suite. I had a natural fondness for the wild scenery of that inhospitable coast, and was well pleased with the prospect of a sojourn there.

"The bright summer passed away like a dream, and October found us still lingering in the 'Eagle's Nest.' The line storm came on, continuing for several days, and the scene from the cliffs beyond the castle was fearfully grand beyond all description. The long line of bold, black coast, beat for ever by the angry waves, which rushed upon each other like the serried squadrons of a great battle; the wild moaning cry of the tortured sea; the shrill scream of the hoarse-mouthed gull; oh, it was a glorious thing to be within such a strong, savage

influence! I said so a thousand times every day, as my soul drank in the delights which the surroundings gave me.

"Hathaway was wonderfully fond of walking on the overhanging rocks, and gazing down into the mysterious depths beneath. Perhaps the turbulence of the waters struck an answering chord in the troublous waste of his own soul! One night—it was past sunset, a wild, windy, raging night—Hathaway set out for the cliffs, whither he was soon followed by Lord Eltham, who immediately joined him. Standing in the shadow of a neighbouring rock, I could see all that passed between them without being myself observed.

"I knew that Hathaway was in a dangerous mood. His dark eyes flashed; the veins in his forehead were like knotted cords.

"There were times when his life-trial was too much for him, and he was more like a maniac than a rational being.

"The twain approached the fearful brink of a jutting precipice and stood gazing over. The terrible grandeur of the scene produced a calm in Lord Eltham's breast, but it wrought upon Hathaway's mind as martial music on the mettle of a war-horse! Lord Eltham stooped to obtain a clearer view of the abyss beneath, the earth whereon he stood crumbled and shook, he clutched the dry root of a shrub and hung suspended over the chasm!

"A demoniac expression crossed Hathaway's face, and by the waning light I read Eltham's fate! The temptation was too great—Eltham dead, and Lady Margaret was free! It was a moment of agonized suspense.

"The white, imploring face of Eltham, his stifled voice crying brokenly for help, and the dark, saturnine features of Hathaway, on which there was no mercy! His rival's life was in his hands; only that crackling piece of wood between him and happiness.

"Hathaway's foot struck the frail root a powerful blow; it broke like a reed, and sank down, down, bearing with it through the gloom the cold, ghastly face of Lord Eltham! Down, down into the black cauldron beneath, with a dull, dead splash, and then the waves dashed the rocks as before, and the wind kept their demon orgies over the newly-buried dead!

"Hathaway turned to flee; his mad frenzy was over; he was no longer the fiend, but the wretched criminal, seeking to hide himself from the consequences of his sin. He would have given his whole life if the past five minutes could have been recalled. I sprang from my concealment and confronted him. I could at last triumph over him, and thus have my revenge for the slight and disfavour he had put upon me at the university. He was stunned at the sight of this witness of his guilt. I threatened to deliver him over to the proper authorities, but he begged and prayed so hard for life and liberty, that my purpose was weakened. He offered me gold in untold quantities, but I would not accept it; I scorned to be bought. But this I told him I would do—his secret should be safe; I would not breathe it to the winds even; but if ever I required any service at his hands, or anything of which he had the keeping, I should not hesitate to use my power to attain my ends! He was only too glad to be rid of me on any terms, and we clasped hands upon the compact.

"The next day the body of Lord Eltham was washed up on the beach a league below the 'Eagle's Nest.' It was supposed that he had fallen from the cliffs in a solitary walk, and his lamented remains were laid to rest with great pomp in the sepulchre of his father. Lady Margaret's grief was terrible to behold. She could not be prevailed upon to leave the castle, and so the whole of the severe winter was passed on the bleak coast. She wasted to a mere shadow, and on stormy nights she would steal down from her chamber, and walk upon the spray-damp cliffs till daybreak. But her parents were worldly people, and they had no ideas of allowing their beautiful daughter to live and die sorrowing over a lost love. Hathaway was wealthy and respectable, and two years after the tragic end of Lord Eltham, they managed to bring about a marriage between Carl Hathaway and Lady Margaret. But it was a marriage only in name, for the lady's heart slept in the grave with Eltham, and Hathaway's crime had gained him only the wreck of the woman he had so madly loved. Not long after her bridal, the unhappy Margaret showed symptoms of insanity, and in a few short months she became a hopeless lunatic. Then it was pitiful to witness the devotion of her husband. He watched her day and night, as one would a beloved and suffering child, and gave himself no rest by his zeal in her service.

"But one wild, stormy night she managed to elude his vigilance, and escaped from the castle, for she still refused to quit the 'Eagle's Nest.' So soon as Hathaway discovered her flight he hurried in pur-

suit of her, and was just in time to catch a glimpse of her snowy robe, as it fluttered out like a ghostly banner above the place where Eltham had met his death. Her husband called out her name, but she gave no heed; she stood erect on the very verge of the precipice, her white arms raised above her head, her dark hair falling around her like a cloud. One instant thus; he had almost reached her, when she cried out, "Arthur, I am coming," and sprang out into darkness. The dead lover and his mistress were united.

"Carl Hathaway sold his estates and left England. For many long years I heard nothing of him, and thought still less. I was intent on my scheme of vengeance against Undine, the Duchess of Hazelwood. The duke had died suddenly of cholera, a year after their marriage, but Undine still lived, and was the mother of a fine boy. My resolve was taken—the mother should suffer through her innocent child. I stole that boy from his friendly home, and took him away to a distant part of the kingdom. How I managed to do it without arousing suspicion does not matter, suffice it that the thing was done.

"Undine, never strong, mourned herself to death for his loss, and I, busy with heaping up wealth (for I had felt the sting of poverty, and was determined yet to know the luxury of riches), experienced no compunction for my base deed.

"I had married a thrifty woman, that Horace, for thus the stolen boy had been baptized by his parents, might have the care of one of the gentler sex. My revenge was sweet at first, but I have lived long enough to repent of it in dust and ashes. I would give everything I possess on earth, for the power to undo that one dark deed. But that is impossible, and knowing this, I have striven hard to do a father's duty by the stolen child. As soon as I could command money in abundance, I settled upon Horace a little fortune, which was to be subject to his own control. I educated him lavishly; I spared no pains to train him to a virtuous life. In that I have succeeded; he has as many virtues as there are sands on the sea-shore, but not a single vice!

"Well, my wife died a little while after, and some years after her decease, I learned of the whereabouts of my old acquaintance, Carl Hathaway. I sought him out; I saw you, Margaret, and then I knew what it was to love. I sought your favour; you regarded me with dislike; I could not live without you. I saw your tender affection for your father; I was wretch enough to take advantage of it. I asked your hand of him, threatening him with exposure and disgrace in case of a refusal. You know the rest. He revealed to you enough of that dark page in his history to cause you to prefer an unblest union with a man whom you despised, to the consequences which must arise from a disclosure of the dread secret! Enclosed you will find the papers and affidavits necessary to establish Horace's claim to the dukedom of Hazelwood; let him do with them as he will, without regard to my memory. And may heaven forgive my guilt, and not cast me utterly away in the day of judgment!

"KIRKE ROTHSAY."

CHAPTER VI.

They stood together in the library of Willow Hall before the veiled portrait, with hand clasped in hand, gazing into each other's eyes. And they read there only faith, triumph and truth, which shall endure for ever. Horace put forth his arms, and drew Margaret within their shelter. There was no sin in this now, for Kirke Rothsay had been not a shadow of kindred to his supposed son.

The confession had carried peace and happiness to two suffering but brave hearts. Its revelations had brought Horace from his Californian exile to Margaret's side. And the vows which the hand of duty had stifled ere they were spoken, were uttered now with grateful voices and thankful lips. For through their long night of tribulation they had come forth at last into the morning, and in its first blush of golden light they were betrothed to each other. And ere the waxing of another moon they were made one at the altar.

The heir of Hazelwood cared little for a title, but he resumed his rightful family name. He found the Hazelwood estate involved in litigations, but he speedily arranged matters, for he was able to produce proofs of his birth, satisfactory to all concerned.

Horace Hazelwood and his fair-browed wife made their home at Willow Hall, and their dark-eyed children often cast curious glances at the veiled portrait, which still hangs in its old accustomed place, a warning against sin, a shield and a protection—the painted counterpart of the unfortunate Lady Margaret.

C. A.

GENTLE LEONIE.

CHAPTER XIII.

We have said that Lady Laure Fontenier, looking from her window on the morning after her parting from Leone Moreau at the turn of the road, when the two had been together to the old mill to take their last sketch, beheld him go up the path, and enter his home with mingled feelings of regret and tenderness.

At this time the young man was filled with gloom and depression, and his fine countenance wore a look of sadness unusual with him. He entered the cottage, and was about to pass immediately to his own room, when the voice of his mother called to him to come into the parlour. She wished to speak with him.

Madame Moreau was a fond and tender mother. This noble son, Leone, was the only object left to her upon which she could lavish the love of her heart, which had, in times past, been so rudely shaken and wrung with grief and wrong. The mother noticed every change of her son's fine face with solicitous affection. She had beheld his companionship with Lady Laure Fontenier with pride and satisfaction. She felt that he was born to a station equal to hers, and that, with her, he would be content, and become an ornament to society. Now, she had seen him coming up the walk with downcast look, and concluded that he was sad because it was not in his power to prosecute the art which he loved so well. And the mother determined to part with the last token of her once happy life, a necklace of valuable diamonds, and thus secure to Leone the means to gratify his desires. With this intention, therefore, she called to him to come into the little parlour, as we have seen.

Leone Moreau endeavoured to banish the cloud from his countenance, and entered the room with a smile upon his lips.

"You wished to see me, mother," he said. "You would tell me something. I wonder what it can be about; for your face is different from its usual look, and your eyes say, that it is some joyful surprise you would utter to me."

"It is, my son. Your eyes have not deceived you, any more than mine have deceived me, when I perceived the sadness of your countenance as you came towards the house. I know how great is your love for me, when you so quietly remain here with your lonely mother, instead of saying, as many a young man would do, 'I must go to Paris. I have talents, and I wish to cultivate them.' But instead, you say in your heart, my brave Leone, 'I must remain with *ma mère*. She would be lonely; she would miss me. I cannot leave her. I will give up all for *ma chère mère*!' I read your heart, my son; I know your feelings; and I cannot accept the sacrifice any longer. You shall go to Paris. I have the means to defray all your expenses there. Then let your heart be satisfied, your countenance ever bright in the future; for you can go now as soon as you desire!" Madame Moreau paused, while she still continued to look upon her son with a look of fond affection in her soft blue eyes.

The young man approached his mother, and gently kissed her upon the forehead, while he replied, in a voice of reverent affection:

"Dear mother, you are mistaken in the heart of your son. He does not wish to leave you. In Paris he would be the most wretched of beings. He is happier here, with you, than in any other spot upon the broad universe."

"What mean you, Leone? Has it not, for years, been the darling wish of your heart, that you could learn more of your dear art? Am I mistaken when I supposed that the impossibility of going, caused the gloom of your countenance, as I beheld you approaching the house? What, then, has caused this change in you? and why do you not now wish to go away? I cannot perceive wherein the change lies, unless—unless—can it be that you have become charmed with Lady Laure Fontenier, and feel how useless and vain would be the endeavour to win a lady of rank for yourself, my son?" and Madame Moreau's face lighted up with this new thought, which came suddenly into her mind.

"*Ma mère*, you have said it," replied the young artist. "You have uttered the true thoughts of my heart, though I had hoped I should be able to keep them safe in my own breast. But never yet have I had a secret from you. You have read this new sentiment which has pervaded my being. Let it rest, then, where it is now. Lady Laure Fontenier is engaged to the wealthy and noble Duke d'Aumale. She is to-morrow to return to Paris with him, and will soon become his wife. It is a fitting match, so the world will say, though the bridegroom is more than three times the senior of the bride. But you

are pale, mother, and the heat of this room is too great for you. Let me open a window; we will not talk longer upon this subject, which gives no pleasure to me or interest to you;" and the young man quickly raised one of the windows, thus letting in the light summer breeze.

But Madame Moreau quickly recovered from the sudden shock which the mention of the Duke d'Aumale's name had brought to her heart. She had sank into a chair in tremulous weakness. She did not rise again; but the force of the great blow was passing away. She could steady her voice to speak, and now she asked again:

"Is Lady Laure Fontenier soon to be wedded to this suitor, Leone? Do you know how soon the ceremony is to take place, my son?"

"I am not aware of the exact date of the marriage. But some time in the autumn or winter," replied Leone, recollecting the words he had overheard the Lady Laure Fontenier utter when he came upon her, unobserved, that morning by the mill.

"Did you say Lady Laure Fontenier was to return to Paris with her lover to-morrow? Has he come down for her, here?" asked Madame Moreau, with a calmness which covered a wildly-beating heart.

"Yes, mother. The old duke has come for her. He is now at the village inn, with his barouches and retinue, and to-morrow will go back with Lady Laure Fontenier sitting by his side."

"Have you seen him—the duke, I mean—Leone? and how does he look now?" questioned his mother, with eager interest in her tones.

"No, I have not seen him. But I heard Lady Laure Fontenier say that he had come, and that she should return with him to-morrow. But you are interested, mother. Perhaps you have seen the Duke d'Aumale in Paris, when you lived there so long ago. He must have been a young man, then; but now he must be old, wrinkled and gray—too old for the beautiful young Lady Laure Fontenier. But, alas for me! there would be more brightness for my heart, probably, if she were not promised to him; but she is noble born, and I am only the child of humble, though respectable birth!" exclaimed the young man, with a sudden impetuosity of manner. Then he added, quickly, as he noticed how deathly pale his mother's face became:

"Pardon me! forgive me, my dear mother! for the thought just now that, if I had been born in a different rank, I could have been more happy in life. I am content—nay, I am blest, in having so gentle and lady-like a mother as you. I might have been the son of coarse, rough parents, and had nothing to raise me above the level of a common ploughboy. I am blest and content with your love and companionship, darling mother, and we have a delightful home together; so that happiness will dwell with us in a greater measure perhaps, than it rests upon palace home or titled wealth." And there was sincerity in the young artist's fine features and deep tones of voice.

Madame Moreau let her eyes rest upon her son now with a grateful fondness in their depths: She said, calmly and solemnly:

"We have many gifts to be thankful for, my son. Heaven is good. He will yet make our path more light. I feel certain. I have always trusted and prayed to Him to take care of us both. Thus far, we have not been forsaken; his hand has upheld and directed our path. The future will not be so darkened but we can see the way. Now, his movement is mysterious. But he will not forsake his own!" and Leone Moreau, returning his mother's look of affection, felt a lightened heart, and that her words would come true.

After her son had gone out, Madame Moreau sat in deep thought. Then she spoke, saying:

"This marriage must not progress! It would be a sin! I must prevent it at any cost to myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

As the Duke d'Aumale was standing upon the steps of the little hostelry, some two hours after he had left the cottage of Dame Charlotte, and listening to the words of Lady Laure Fontenier, concerning the young artist, he beheld the young man on the sidewalk, walking past the inn. He knew that it must be Leone Moreau, from the striking resemblance to Lady Leonie Moreau, whom he had won, in her youth, to become his bride.

The Duke d'Aumale trembled violently as he caught sight of the young man. His eyes followed him with a fascinated spell. He saw his manly, graceful figure, and his broad brow, which he knew must be fair, like his mother's. He saw that his hair was brown, beautiful and soft, and he fancied inclined to curl around the temples. He could tell plainly, from the little distance between them, that his features were regular and perfect, and the eyes blue and mild.

The Duke d'Aumale gazed long, and with visible

agitation after the young man, as he passed by. Then he uttered, in a voice which was filled with sudden tenderness, "Yes, it is her son! It is he! Leone Moreau."

"Ah! you are correct, when you say that the young man who just passed my inn is Leone Moreau, most noble duke!" said the voice of Monsieur Lopart, the keeper of the hostelry, who just then chanced to come out upon the steps, and overheard the last remark of his guest. "He it is, whom I was informing your highness about this morning, as having made the acquaintance of the beautiful young Lady Laure Fontenier, who is visiting at Dame Charlotte Lobeau's cottage, upon the hill. I told you, then, that the two—the noble young lady and our village artist—had become great friends, and both appeared to enjoy the relation vastly. So that I have often said to my good wife, when I have beheld the two together, looking so engaged with each other when they have been out taking pictures of our little town, that I shouldn't wonder if something came of this great friendship. The young man can paint a picture with any of the artists I ever saw; and he is handsome. You mustn't be offended at my frankness, my lord duke." Then he continued again:

"As I was saying, Leone Moreau is as grand-looking as any nobleman I have ever seen, and that is a great thing in a man's favour. Then he can paint with any teacher I ever saw, and bids fair to be a noted man. And taking all these things together, they help to make the fortune of a man. Suppose this fine young lady should happen to look on him with favour, and say to herself, 'This artist is handsome and charming, and I fancy his looks more than any other young man I have ever seen.' The young man's fortune would be made; if this should be the case with him and Lady Laure Fontenier, whom, I fancy, would be just the one to take such a course."

The Duke d'Aumale did not reply to Monsieur Lopart's voluble remarks for a little period—until the man had spoken again, and asked, as he noticed the sternness of the nobleman's features:

"You do not like my sentiments, noble duke. I have spoken without thought of who was my hearer. Pardon me for uttering words which do not meet with your approval."

"Where is this cottage, Monsieur Lopart? You spoke of it this morning to me, when you mentioned this young man. It must be near here, I imagine, as I am told that it lies on the direct road from Paris to the hamlet, and is not far from Dame Lobeau's house on the farther side from here. But I have not yet seen it, that I am aware; and, since you have given me such glowing accounts of the place and its occupants, I bethink me that I must at least learn where the home of the two is located."

"I can tell you in a moment, noble duke," said Monsieur Lopart. "Please to step with me upon the portico of my door, and we can see, from there, the little house, which lies a little back from the road, and is nearly covered with vines."

The Duke d'Aumale followed him, and in a moment the two were looking in the direction indicated by monsieur's pointing hand.

"This is the spot, noble duke," said the innkeeper. "Does not your highness think it a sweet one, and that it looks like the home of folks who love flowers and everything that is pleasant about them? Madame Moreau and her son like to surround themselves with flowers, trees, vines and birds; and it would do your heart good to get a peep into their charming little home."

"How does the lady look, Monsieur Lopart? Is she handsome, like her son—the youth who just passed here?" questioned the duke, wishing to know if the innkeeper would give the same description that Lady Laure Fontenier had given him in the morning's conversation concerning Madame Moreau.

"She is much like him in form and feature, your highness; and in youth must have been very handsome and elegant. But her face is worn and constantly pale. She seems sad, and I suppose must have had trouble when she lost her husband, more than ordinarily follows the death of a partner, for she never spoke freely about him, as other women do when they are asked about their husband. But she is a fine woman; and as I said, must have been handsome when she was young," replied monsieur.

The Duke d'Aumale did not make any answer. His eyes were bent on the far-away cottage. He saw the figure of a woman, slender and tall, draped in black, come out of the door and enter the little garden. His heart told him who it was. For a few moments he gazed, till the form disappeared amid the shrubbery clustering around the house; then he turned away, while a sigh welled up from his parted lips.

"I will descend to my rooms. The sunlight is too bright to look about to much advantage now. But I

perceive that the little cottage which you have mentioned, is most charmingly and romantically located, and should judge it to be the abode of refinement and taste."

Half an hour later the Duke d'Aumale beheld, from the open window of his room in the inn, Leone Moreau pass again, on his way back to his home. The duke looked on him with mingled feelings within his breast.

"Yes, he is her son!" he repeated again. "And she it is who lives in this cottage. But monsieur has said that she is a widow. It must be, then, that Louis Dagobert has met a speedy reward for his baseness by an early death, leaving her alone to the punishment of hers. She was once very dear to me, and my heart is troubled now when I again meet her. But she was guilty. She and her son must suffer."

CHAPTER XV.

On the evening following the conversation between Lady Laure Fontenier and the Duke d'Aumale, the former went out for a walk, accompanied by her maid Lizette. The night was very lovely, and it tempted them to go farther than had been their intention, when Lady Laure Fontenier caught up her hat impulsively, after gazing out of the vine-wreathed window of her room, and said:

"Come, Lizette, we will walk down as far as the old mill. The evening is too charming to remain within doors. We will take a little ramble, therefore, and give another last look upon the old ruined mill. To-morrow, you know, we go back to Paris. I have thought it best to leave here; though, as you know, the duke is not one whom I can love, even if I become his wife. But when I perceived how pale and ill he suddenly became this afternoon when I was conversing with him, I am convinced that he loves me truly and devotedly, and it would be very cruel and wrong for me to give him up, as I thought to do. I shall, therefore, return to Paris; and, in the performance of my duties, endeavour to bring, at least, content to my heart. You would advise this, would you not, Lizette? for I know that you seek the best welfare of your mistress in this matter," said Lady Laure Fontenier.

The maid replied:

"My lady, whom I adore with my whole heart, I wish only for your good. If you think it your duty to become the duke's wife, then you ought surely to do so. I thought your heart was fixed on this handsome, charming young artist. If that be so, then you could not be happy as the Duke d'Aumale's wife. But you must decide this matter yourself, Lady Laure Fontenier; no one can do it for you; and I should not like to advise you about it."

"Your words are very well chosen, Lizette. I perceive that you do not wish to commit yourself in any way by giving advice," said her mistress, with something of a smile overspreading her features. "But, since I must act for myself, I shall try to perform my duty towards my father and the Duke d'Aumale, and keep my promised word to them and myself. I can perceive no way to avoid the path which has been marked out for me. Were this Leone Moreau a nobleman in Paris, or were he even here to proffer his love to me, the case might be somewhat different. You have read my heart towards him. I blush for myself when I feel that Lady Laure Fontenier gave away her love unsought. Therefore, lest I should be tempted to do another foolish deed, and make known, in some unguarded moment, this feeling to the noble young artist, I will go to my father's chateau as soon as possible, and interest myself in some other thought and occupation than artists and sketching."

And, saying this, Lady Laure Fontenier left the cottage, and, followed by Lizette, she went down the road leading to the ruined mill.

The two arrived at their destination, and stood in the quiet moonlight looking upon the water of the stream, shining through the dark foliage of the trees along the bank.

"How beautiful it is, my lady!" exclaimed Lizette, in a gratified tone. "I am so glad that we came hither. See, how the water peeps through the trees, and the moon makes it look like shining silver. This is the most charming spot in the hamlet, and I think your ladyship made a good choice, when you selected it to take back to Paris with you in your sketch-book," said the girl.

"Yes, this is certainly one of the most lovely spots here. It is picturesque in scenery, and the ruined walls of the old building give effect to it; and I am gratified that I was enabled to transfer it to my collection of sketches," replied Lady Laure Fontenier.

Just then Lizette darted from her mistress's side suddenly, and said:

"I am going to look at the water from the bridge, my lady. I think it is even a prettier view there

than here. But I will be back directly, so you need not come, if you choose not to do so."

The girl had disappeared with the last words, and her mistress heard her feet sounding upon the bridge, which was hidden from her present point of view by the spreading willows which grow close on the river's bank.

But hardly had Lizette disappeared before her mistress was joined by Leone Moreau, who seemed somewhat surprised, and very much gratified, at this unexpected meeting with Lady Laure Fontenier.

The young man approached her, and saluted her with a warmth of manner which he was betrayed into by the unlooked-for encounter.

"I am gratified to meet you again, Lady Laure Fontenier," he said. "I supposed, when I parted from you this morning, that I should not see you again before leaving Troyes. But perhaps the beauty of the evening has tempted you to come hither, as it has given me the desire to come to our pleasant place of sketching. I am fond of this spot, and shall be more so when you are gone away, Lady Laure Fontenier," he said, earnestly.

"And why do you feel more interest in this than any other?" exclaimed Lady Laure Fontenier, urged to ask the question by a sudden impulse she could not resist, as the sad tones of his voice fell upon her ears in low cadences.

"You ask me a question which I cannot well reply to, without explaining the true state of my heart," said the young man, quickly.

He looked upon her face as he spoke, and perceived that it became flushed, and that she was suddenly agitated. Then his own strong feelings led him on. He meant not to have uttered the words which followed in impetuous ardent tones; but the tide was now strong within him, and, for a brief space, it swept in and overmastered his strong resolve, and forced calmness of manner.

"Lady Laure Fontenier! beautiful and noble lady! you ask 'why I seek this spot?' It is because your feet have pressed the greensward here—because your eyes have looked upon this old ruined mill—upon the waters sparkling through the trees—and because you have enjoyed these things with me. Your image will ever appear to be with me here, when you have departed to your home. I shall recall each place that you have noticed with double interest. I shall come and sit here many times, in the future which now looks gloomy to me because you are about to depart from my daily life. But I shall remember all your looks; cherish your slightest smile; and endeavour to be content with my solitary walks, and the duties which come to me daily. With you will go my heart. But my body and work must be here in this quiet hamlet, with my loved and cherished mother," said Leone Moreau.

He stopped a moment; then, as Lady Laure Fontenier did not reply, he added, in a voice filled with earnest penitence:

"I have frightened you, Lady Laure Fontenier! I am weak! I ask your pardon. You have been kind, and granted me your friendship. Never again will you behold my face, for I have no heart to prosecute my studies now. Do not, then, look upon me in parting with frowning eyes. Pardon my impetuous language, and I will leave you now, even at this moment, and not trouble you with my presence more!"

And the young man rose to put his intention into execution and leave the lady. But he was prevented. Lady Laure Fontenier rose and stood beside him.

"Let us be friends," she uttered, in tremulous tones. "More we cannot be, for I am pledged to another—the Duke d'Aumale."

"Do you love him?" questioned Leone Moreau; then he checked himself suddenly, and exclaimed: "Do not reply to this question, for I have no right to ask it. I forget myself, and you. I will go now, before I am tempted farther. Farewell! May you be happy! Farewell!" And, with a hasty movement, the young man raised the Lady Laure Fontenier's hand to his lips, imprinted a kiss upon it, and was gone, leaving her alone.

A few moments later Lizette came back. She looked upon her mistress's pale features, then she said softly to herself:

"It is of no use. She is obedient to her father to the last. The young artist is too proud to ask her to love him, and break with the Duke d'Aumale. So this meeting has ended all my hopes. When I saw him coming, and hastened away, I thought it might be otherwise, for I think the count would give his consent by-and-bye."

CHAPTER XVI.

WHILE Lady Laure Fontenier and Leone Moreau were holding converse by the old mill, there was another, and quite as interesting, a meeting between Madame Moreau and the Duke d'Aumale in the



[THE DUKE CONFRONTS HIS WIFE.]

cottage of the former. The Duke d'Aumale had gone out from the hostelry the early part of the evening, with a desire to obtain a nearer view of the home of his once-loved wife. There was a half wish in his heart that he might obtain sight of her, and, perhaps, speak with her; but this was all unsettled as yet. He did not think of entering the cottage, and revealing himself to her.

He walked along, therefore, after he had left the inn, and passed Dame Lobau's home, where Lady Laure Fontenier, he presumed, now rested in her chamber, thus making ready for the morrow's travel. He looked up at the jasmine-wreathed windows, but saw no fair face gazing out into the soft moonlight night.

"Lady Laure Fontenier is surely taking rest for to-morrow," he said. "We shall commence the journey early, and she has thoughtfully retired. She looked fatigued, and almost ill this morning, when I separated from her. I feel how unwise it was for her to go away from Paris this season. She has met this young man—Leone Moreau—the son of my guilty wife, and her eyes have been seduced by the fineness of his appearance. But I believe the story she told me this morning. I believe that he has not yet whispered love-words to her ears; and, though Lady Laure Fontenier frankly told me that he was not indifferent to her heart, yet she is too modest, and too tender of my feelings and the desires of her parent, to make known her sentiments to him. I am, therefore, sure of her hand; and, after she has become my wife—the Duchess d'Aumale—then I feel certain that she will grow more yielding and tender towards me, and give me the affection of her heart," said the duke, as he wended his way towards the home of Leone Moreau and his lady-mother.

The moonlight revealed the cottage to him as he arrived opposite to it on the highway. He stopped, and gazed at it with eyes which seemed to behold its inmates. He imagined that Madame Moreau sat in the little parlour whose windows fronted the house. The windows were open, and a faint light from within shone into the little garden without. He thought that he could see her seated at a table with some work in her hands, while her son would be upon the opposite side, reading some interesting volume to her, or perchance showing some of his late sketches to the admiring eyes of his mother. He knew that her features must be pale; and he imagined that grief, and the prying of her conscience, which he thought must have awakened in all these years of loneliness, must have made fearful ravages upon her youthful beauty and freshness. While the Duke d'Aumale was indulging in these

conclusions, the door opened, and Leone Moreau came out.

The nobleman, with a sudden impulse, drew aside under the shadow of a tall elm; and the young man, a few moments later, passed him on his way towards the village.

After Leone Moreau had gone out of sight, the Duke d'Aumale came out of his place of shelter. He looked around, and saw that no one was upon the highway. Then the light of the window seemed to beckon him to go up the path, and steal a look into the open casement; and, with a cautious hand, he raised the latch of the wicket gate, and stole up the path till he stood beneath the low-framed window.

He did not behold Madame Moreau, as he supposed, seated at the table, with work in her hand. A delicate basket was there, and some articles of light work within it. But the lady had risen, and now came from an adjoining apartment with her bonnet and shawl in her hand. He saw her put these on, and he sank down under the thick shrubbery as he beheld her about to leave the room.

"She is going out for an evening walk," said the duke under his breath. "Madame Moreau has not forgotten her old tastes since she ceased to be the Duchess d'Aumale. I will watch, and observe whither her fancy will lead her."

But the attention of the Duke d'Aumale was arrested at this moment by the words uttered by Madame Moreau, as she placed the lamp in the centre of the table, and then proceeded to lower the curtain preparatory to setting forth on her walk.

"I must hasten, and return before Leone comes back," said the lady. "I must not let him imagine that I have been out, or he will question me as to my errand, and why I went not with him. Oh that I could take him with me to his father, and plead for him as I could not now plead for myself! But he knows nothing of his birth—nothing of his father, only a tale which I was compelled to invent, and tell him to satisfy the many questionings he has put to me concerning his lost parent. Yes, Leone, my son—the heir of the Duke d'Aumale—I was compelled to say to your many questionings—'that your parent died in your early years, leaving me an unhappy, mourning widow,' and that accounted to you for the tears which you often beheld in my eyes in your childhood, and since in your later years. But now I will go to the Duke d'Aumale—the husband of my youth—and plead with him not to mar his son's future happiness, by wedding the Lady Laure Fontenier, and not to farther wreck mine by taking another to his heart and home. I will go and tell him this; and beg that he will not commit the sin of

wedding another when his true and lawful wife is living!" and Madame Moreau left the room as she finished her sentence, and a moment later came out into the garden-walk.

The Duke d'Aumale, with a sudden impulse, rose and sprang quickly out in the path. His heart was filled with indignation at the intention of his guilty wife. He now confronted her with flashing eyes, and angry, stern tone:

"I have overheard your words, Madame Moreau, and I now save you the trouble of seeking me elsewhere," he exclaimed as he stood before her.

She shrank back from him for a moment, surprised, and almost terrified at his sudden appearance.

"You need not shrink away from me, Madame Moreau. I am here—the Duke d'Aumale, once your husband, now, the enemy of you and your son, should you seek to prevent my marriage with Lady Laure Fontenier. I have heard your words, uttered just now to yourself. You spoke of coming to me. You have put on your bonnet and shawl, and were going to seek me. What, then, have you to say when we stand face to face—I your once injured husband, you my guilty, dishonoured wife? Speak quickly, for I have not much time to bestow upon you or yours now," and the stern-browed nobleman stood like an angry judge before Madame Moreau.

"Duke d'Aumale," said the lady, "you are harsh and stern. You are now about to commit a crime, by wedding Lady Laure Fontenier. I am your lawful wife, and the marriage vows have never been annulled. Leone is your son. If you wed again you wrong us, yourself and Lady Laure Fontenier. I entreat you, then—I beg even, on bended knee," and the lady knelt down in the path before the duke, and clasped her hands in an attitude of supplication as she spoke:

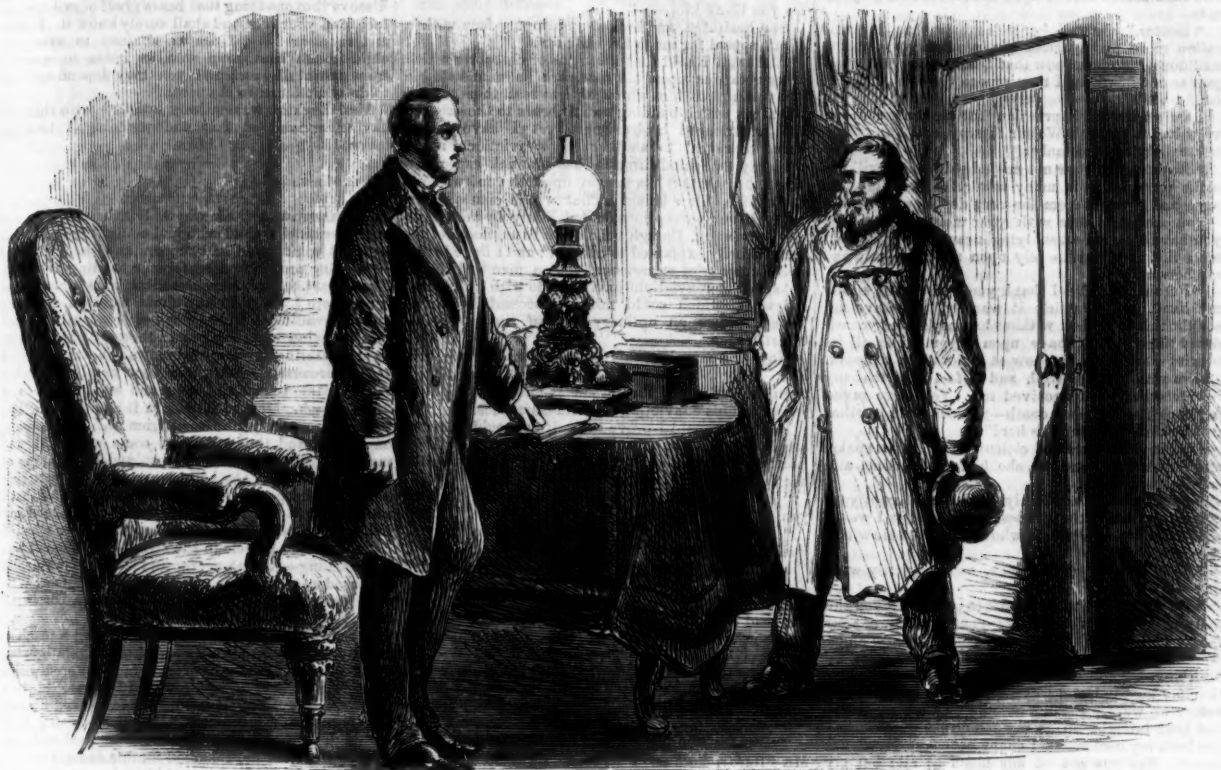
"Do not—oh, do not, Duke d'Aumale, commit this sinful act! It will cause you only unhappiness in the future. Lady Laure Fontenier is young. She cannot, even if she loves you, bring happiness to your older years. She ought not to be your wife. Oh, promise me, Duke d'Aumale, that you will not go farther in this matter. Promise, and I will never trouble you more."

The nobleman turned from her pleading tones, and spoke roughly and sternly.

"You cannot effect your purpose, guilty, debased woman. Your son shall never wed Lady Laure Fontenier. She shall become my wife!"

He left her, and passed out of the gate, and she remained mute and motionless in the deep agony of her grief.

(To be continued.)



[A STRANGE VISITOR.]

CORDELIA'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER V.

I WENT to bed, and fell asleep, an obscure youth, unknown to fame, wondering how long it would be before I could gain the confidence of the people, and obtain a practice.

I awoke in the morning, and walked forth to sniff the balmy air of mid-day, and found myself famous! All through the village, from house to house, and from lip to lip, the story had gone that I had saved the life of Cordelia Larkton. And this is the way the story had been told:

The new doctor had gone to see Miss Larkton, whom the great physicians of London had given up to death. He had looked upon her, and had declared that he could save her; he had gone to work in his own way, and the result was, that the beautiful girl was saved!

In some cases the story had even a more wonderful colouring. But the belief was general that the patient had been snatched from the jaws of death; for Mr. Larkton himself had been heard to say, that he owed the life of his child to the new doctor.

And now people discovered how wonderful had been the cure of the child who had had the scarlet fever.

So far as I was able, I sought to remove the false impression. To those who spoke with me upon the subject I told the truth. I told them that I had simply discovered that a mistake had been made by other physicians, and that the disease had not been a fatal one at all, though it had been an extremely dangerous one. But instead of detracting from my popularity, all such assurances on my part only tended to add thereto; for people like to see a modest man, and when I utterly disclaimed the honour they would confer, they were more determined than before to bestow it upon me.

However, I bore it gracefully, and attended to my business; for already I had as much as I could comfortably attend to. Cordelia Larkton was improving with marvellous rapidity. Her cheeks were filling out; the rose-tints of health were richly blushing thereon; the clear blue eyes were full of that soft, liquid light which is born of joy; while the body had so far gained strength that she could walk about her chamber, and arrange her own dress.

I visited her on Sunday afternoon, and to show me how strong she was, she took my arm, and walked to and fro across the room. We had taken two or three

turns, when she stopped, and asked me if it would hurt her to walk out upon the verandah. Her chamber faced the west, and as the sunbeams had been resting there all the afternoon, and were now bathing that part of the mansion in golden glory, I did not think a little time spent there could result in harm; and so I told her.

With a joyous laugh she bade me get her hat and mantle, and commanded that I should give her my arm for the walk.

"It is not every patient who can find a doctor and a brother both in the same person," she said, as I threw the mantle over her shoulders. "And, certainly," she added, a little more soberly, "you won't think me presuming, will you?"

"If you knew how I blessed you in my heart for the confidence you repose in me," I said, "you would not retain a thought that could suggest such a question."

"Do you really bless me?" she cried, with child-like simplicity.

"I do, most certainly," I answered, looking into her face, and smiling.

"Then we are even," she went on, at the same time putting her arm within mine; "for I have been blessing you ever since the first hour of our acquaintance. And haven't I had cause to bless you? Only think how you found me; and then think how I am now. No, no," she cried, as she saw me about to interrupt her. "It is of no avail for you to deny it. Before I saw you I was dying. Nature was giving up her hold upon this poor weak frame, because I had been made to believe that the union of soul and body could not continue. Death was upon me, simply because I was waiting for him to come. Day and night, waking and sleeping, that grim monster was present to my imagination, and I was ready to go with him. But enough of this. You came, and you raised my soul up out of its depth of despair, and the body followed it. There, sir, this is the casement. You see the hasp. It opens inward. Oh, how delightful!"

The air was soft and balmy, and as she stepped out upon the verandah her lungs expanded, and her whole being seemed to expand also. Lightly but closely her arm rested upon my own, and her happy voice was to my ear like the soft whispering of an angel. She thought of nothing but her own recovery, and the present blessing of returning health, and if she thought of me it was only as one thinks of a kind and indulgent friend. But how was it with me? Ah, if the beautiful convalescent could have known how my heart was beating—if she could have read the thoughts that moved my soul, she

might not have been so free and joyous. She would not have rested her hand upon my arm so confidently, and her tongue would not have rattled on so volubly, in its strain of happiness and gratitude.

We had taken a dozen turns up and down the verandah, when I saw Walter Fitzroy coming up the park from the road.

"Ah," said I, as she closed a poetical allusion to the beautiful scenery, which was spread out to view from the position we held, "here comes our friend, Fitzroy. He will be surprised to see you here."

Cordelia cast one look upon the advancing figure, and every joy-mark disappeared from her face, as though some hidden pain had stricken her. She tried to hide her emotion from me, but she must have known that she did not succeed, and as we turned towards the open casement she said she had walked enough. I did all in my power to divert her mind from the gloom into which it had evidently sunk; and when we had entered the chamber, and I had closed the casement behind us, I smilingly assured her that the exercise would be beneficial.

"Of course it will," she replied. And in the words which followed I could detect an aim to remove from my mind any unpleasant impression which might have been made there.

In a little while the cloud had so far been removed that she spoke cheerfully and happily, and in this frame I left her.

In the lower hall I met Mr. Fitzroy. He greeted me politely, and tried to appear cordial; but I detected a lurking spirit which was far from pleasant, and I did not stop to converse with him—a movement which seemed to be as satisfactory to him as it was agreeable to me.

Thus far I had remained entirely in the dark concerning Walter Fitzroy's connection with the family, unless I had gained light from my own surmises, and I was becoming anxious to know by what tenure he held the position he seemed to occupy. I had just taken my hat from the rack, and was adjusting it upon my head, when I heard my name pronounced, and upon turning round I beheld Mrs. Larkton. She wished to speak with me a moment, if I would step into the parlour.

Knowing what "a moment" means under such circumstances, I replaced my hat upon the rack, and followed her into the apartment designated. She closed the door behind me with her own hand, and I then noticed that she was considerably moved. She seemed very anxious, and as she motioned me to a seat she trembled perceptibly. She cast a quick glance around, evidently to see that we were alone,

and then seated herself upon the sofa directly by my side.

"Doctor," she said, her voice betraying her agitation more plainly than her previous movements had done, "do you know that I have come to regard you as one in whom I may repose the most implicit confidence?"

I had an instant impression that the present interview had to do with Walter Fitzroy, and I answered her, calmly and solemnly:

"Madam, you have not misjudged me. I will not make protestation in many words. I have only to say—and I say it from the very depths of my heart—you may trust me with your more than life. If you have a sacred trust, lying nearer to your soul than life, fear not to rely upon my friendship and my honour."

"I thank you, sir—I thank you!" she cried, taking my hand, and pressing it warmly. "I have not sought this interview without having soberly considered the subject I have upon my mind in all its bearings, so that I am now at no loss how to speak. I have watched you well, and I feel sure that my instincts have not deceived me. You have saved my daughter from one death—there may be another from which you can save her!"

Mrs. Larkton trembled violently as she thus spoke, and I took her hand, as she had taken mine, and said to her:

"Speak plainly and freely, madam. I accept your communication in the strictest confidence, as I would the confession of a patient who should trust me with a sacred secret."

She thanked me with a look, and presently went on:

"Doctor Cartwright, in order to present to you the matter clearly, I must give you a little of our family history. Years ago, when Mr. Larkton and I were married, we had a friend—a friend whom we both loved—named Philip Fitzroy. He was older than my husband, and was married four or five years before we were. For his wife he took a woman who had been brought up as my foster-sister, and had she been my own sister, I could not have loved her better. She was not of our blood at all; but my father adopted her when she was a mere child, and she always bore our name. Lydia Graves she was called;—my maiden name was Graves. Well, Philip Fitzroy and his wife were like brother and sister to us, and we loved them devotedly. Fifteen years ago Mr. Fitzroy moved away, and went into the same business that my husband pursued, and during the remaining years of his life they did much together. Both being bankers of good standing and unquestionable credit, it became very convenient and mutually profitable for them to draw upon each other. Mr. Fitzroy visited us several times after that, and he had much to say about his son, Walter, who had left us a smart, bright, active boy of fifteen. He said he should leave his business in his son's hands, and it was his desire that our Cordelia should become Walter's wife. At the time this idea was pleasing to us. How could it be otherwise? I was in almost weekly correspondence with Lydia, and she spoke of her darling Walter as a paragon of manly beauty and honour."

"The last time Philip Fitzroy visited us was three years ago, and at that time he had intended to bring his son with him; but they could not both leave home, so he came alone, promising that when business called one of them north again, Walter should come. And during that visit we entered into an arrangement, that when Cordelia was twenty years of age she should become Walter's wife."

"I know it was foolish—very foolish—but we did not think so then. We were really anxious—taking Philip's assurance of the character of his son for the truth—that the bargain should be made, and we made it. Mr. Fitzroy declared that he would go home and make his will, and so word it that his son's inheritance of his property, in case of his own death, should depend upon that son's taking our daughter for his wife."

"Philip Fitzroy returned to his home, and before the time came for another visit to London on business, both he and his wife were stricken down by death."

"There is no need that I should dwell upon what was to us a sad and sorrowful event. The son remained till he had passed a proper season of mourning, and had also seen the business properly arranged, and then he came to visit us."

"Doctor Cartwright, can you not guess the rest?"

"Madam," I answered, promptly, "I can guess how you and your daughter feel; but I cannot guess how your husband feels."

"Oh, sir," she said, "you have spoken exactly to the point. My husband considers himself bound by his promise to his friend, and he would give his daughter's hand to the man who has come to claim

her. But tell me, sir, what is your opinion of him? Do you think him—"

She hesitated, and looked up into my face with a silent appeal for me to help her out.

Although I hold that the signs of character which a man carries upon his face, are as unmistakable and truthful to him who is able to read them, as are the signs which budding nature bears to the ken of the experienced husbandman, yet I have never dared to reveal to another the convictions made upon my own mind through that channel, especially when the question has turned upon the moral character of a fellow being. That which comes to us through our perceptions, aided solely by metaphysical reasoning, though conclusive to us, may not be satisfactorily explained to another; and I have found even in my brief experience, that a man had better not speak of convictions having to do with individual character, which could not be successfully maintained before an ordinary jury of twelve disinterested men.

Now I knew that this Walter Fitzroy was a villain. I knew it just as well as though his name had been entered upon the prison calendar, and I had witnessed his conviction for heinous crimes.

But how should I prove it? How could I make another understand what I felt convinced of? Mrs. Larkton observed my hesitation, and, after awhile, she finished her sentence:

"Do you think him a good man? Oh! I know you do not. I can see it in your look."

"My dear madam," I returned with a smile, "if you can so easily read my thoughts in my face, I should think you might read the character of Mr. Fitzroy."

"And so I can, sir," she exclaimed, vehemently. "I can read it in his face. He has a countenance that repels me. I cannot tell what it is, but I know it makes me afraid of him."

Here was an opportunity to speak the truth without assuming any direct responsibility, and I did it at once. I took the lady's hand, and said to her, in a calm, earnest tone:

"Mrs. Larkton, I dare not tell you what I think of Mr. Fitzroy, because I have no right to influence another either for or against a man, simply upon the basis of my own surmises, but I can give you a rule of life which you may follow as safely and surely as you can follow any rule that has to do with human judgment; and it is this: Those impressions first made upon your mind, touching the general characteristics of an individual—impressions that settle down upon your convictions, reaching your heart, and moulding your judgment—are sure to be the correct ones. Subsequent events may seem to disprove them, but it is only in appearance, not in fact. You will understand, I speak of those who possess keen perceptions, and whose mental powers are in a healthy state. For instance, you shall meet a person to-day for the first time. You do not like him. The first impression is a chilly one, and for the life of you, you cannot drive the impression away. For the time to come that person may be able to befriend you; social relations may have sprung up, which have opened to you some of his brighter and better qualities—so that you forget the first impressions, and begin to wonder how you could have been so sadly mistaken. And yet, in truth, the mistake is in the last judgment. Be sure that in the person's character, lying dormant, perhaps, are all the evil propensities that at first struck a chill to your soul. And so, on the other hand, you may meet one who strikes you favourably. You love him as soon as you have become acquainted with him. In time something arises, and you become estranged; and then you are surprised that you could have so over-estimated that person. But it is not so. The mistake is with the last judgment. Accident has begotten enmity; but be sure the grand and generous qualities of the heart that first attracted you are still there, and if you give them opportunity, they will by-and-by manifest themselves brighter and stronger than ever. I think I may safely say that the most potent and enduring friendships of life are those which follow one of these re-unions after an accidental estrangement."

The lady listened to me very attentively, and when I had concluded, it needed not her words to assure me how my remarks had pleased her. She told me how grateful she was for what I had said, and then she continued:

"I understand you, sir, and I shall seek to draw no more from you of that which I can read for myself as on a printed page; but I have a favour to ask. If you will serve me, I will keep faith with you most sacredly. If Fitzroy's a bad man, my husband must know it. Cordelia will be twenty years of age on the second day of July. Oh, there may be some way in which you can discover his real character from overt acts; and certainly you would not hesitate to make them known."

"No, madam," I answered, promptly. "Let me discover but one thing that bears proof of evil upon its face, and your husband shall surely know it. Believe me, my dear lady, I am as anxious to save your child from a lifetime of woe, as I was to save her from mortal disease; and you may depend upon me to do what I can to that end."

Mrs. Larkton was entirely satisfied with this, and having arrived at this understanding, I took my leave.

CHAPTER VI.

It was growing dusk when I left the mansion, and having visited a child who had a slight touch of the croup, I went home, had supper, and then attended an evening prayer and conference meeting in which I took part. That was closed at nine o'clock, and from there I went to my home, where I spent an hour in reading. As the clock struck ten I noticed that the wind was rising, and I thought I heard light drops pattering upon my windows. I was surprised at this, because the stars had been nearly all visible when I came in; and I got up and went to the outer door to look. Mercy! how dark it had grown. The heavens were draped in black from zenith to horizon, on every hand the wind had come out chill and murmuring from the north-west, and great drops of rain were falling. As I liked to hear the pattering of the rain-drops upon my windows, I concluded that I would read a while longer; and I had opened my book and lifted my feet to a second chair, when I heard carriage wheels in the street. The sound was approaching—it came nearer and nearer—and finally it ceased as the vehicle stopped before my door. Who could be coming at this time—and in a carriage? Surely my fame was growing.

A knock at my door. I opened it—and a man entered—a man of middle age, short in stature, but thick-set and heavily built; his face covered with a thick, sandy beard; and his body enveloped in a long, coarse gray overcoat. As he removed his hat, the light from my lamp fell full upon his face, and with an instinct which was as natural with me as it was to breathe, I looked for his character. No amount of natural beard can hide a human face; for the beard is a feature in itself, and a most important one.

My visitor was a student of human nature as well as myself, for, before he spoke, he ran his eyes over me, and I could plainly see that he was trying to make out what sort of a man he had to deal with. Did he think of robbing me,—and was he scanning my frame to determine the amount of physical resistance he was likely to meet?—for to be sure his face gave token of a disposition strongly bent that way. I smiled within myself as the thought crossed me, for he would have found the young doctor a difficult customer to handle. And the idea of robbery was increased somewhat by the discovery which I made by the sound, that there was another man outside with the horses.

But the stranger betrayed no belligerent disposition. He looked at me until he had gained what he could of information from that source, and then he took the seat which I had proffered, and spoke:

"Doctor, I have come for you to do something in your line. Not far away there is a man whose life you may save. Will you go with me and see him?"

"I am always ready to answer any call for my professional services, sir," I answered, "and if you'll tell me where your friend is, and what is the matter with him, I can tell you if I will go."

"The man has met with a serious accident, doctor,—a very serious accident."

"And where is he?" I asked.

"Never mind that," the visitor said. "You shall be taken to him, if you will go; and you shall be brought safely back."

"Really, sir," I returned, hardly knowing what to make of the man's meaning. "I don't see the need of such reservation. If there be a man in pressing need of my professional services—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted the visitor, impatiently, "let me come at it directly, and then it'll be all plain to you. The man you are to visit does not wish his whereabouts to be known; and if you go to see him, you must go with a bandage over your eyes, and suffer it to be put on again before you come away. But you shall be well paid, sir. You shall set your own price."

I hesitated ere I answered, and the stranger, mistaking the cause thereof, continued:

"You need have no fears, sir. You shall be taken safely out, and you shall be brought safely back. I have a good covered coach at hand, in which you will be entirely shielded from the storm."

"My dear sir," I said, with a nod and a smile, "I was not thinking of danger to myself; I was thinking how I could best frame my language, so that you would at once understand me. I am willing to help

your friend; but I am not willing to go blind-fold."

"But, doctor, you shall be—"

I put out my hand and stopped him.

"There is no need of saying anything more on that score. I will not suffer myself to be hoodwinked." The fellow looked into my face again, and a grim smile broke over his dark features as he said:

"Well, if you won't be, then I s'pose you won't—and so there's an end on't."

"Look at me," said I, with a suddenness and sternness that fairly startled him. "You come to engage me in my professional business. As a physician I am bound to keep every secret of my patient that can properly be kept. Now, if there be more in this case than you can trust to me, then go and seek a physician whom you can trust. I want nothing to do with the business farther."

The man was puzzled. He saw that I meant what I said, and he very soon determined that if he would secure my services, he must trust me.

"Well, doctor," he said, with a little shake of the body, as though he would free himself from the doubt that troubled him, "I'll tell you as much of the truth as there's any need of your knowing. My friend has been engaged in a business that might get him into trouble if the thing were known, so it's rather necessary that it should be kept secret. If you take in the papers, your attention may be called to the case to-morrow, and if you are as shrewd as I think you are, your suspicions will light upon this man. Well, now, if you know exactly where he is, you may feel called upon to expose him; but if you don't know where he is, you will have nothing to say. Your professional honour might keep you from saying anything about the wounded man; but it wouldn't keep you from revealing his whereabouts, if you knew it. So wouldn't it be better for you not to know too much?"

There was truth in this; and, after a little thought, I acknowledged as much; and a little farther reflection determined me that I would go and see the injured man.

I was moved to this by several considerations, two of which were very strong ones. Passing over my desire to help a fellow-creature in distress, and my wish for a patient, we come, first, to my earnest desire to have a "capital" case upon my hands. I had assisted in many capital operations while in the hospital, but I had never had one of my own, and I wanted one. I wished to know from my own experience how I should succeed, for it is the first success that begets confidence and gives steadiness to the nerves in after cases.

And, secondly, I had a great curiosity to go with my dark-faced visitor and see his injured friend. There was a spice of adventure in the prospect which lured me, and hence I made up my mind as I have stated.

Touching personal danger, I did not apprehend any. The man before me, though fit to "nab a purse to the cutting of a throat," meant me no harm; and, furthermore, there was that in his countenance, dark as it was, which gave token of that stern sense of honour which may exist among thieves.

"Well, sir," I finally said, rising from my chair to show that I meant business, "I will go with you; and I understand our bargain to be this; I am to ride inside the coach to the house where your friend is, and at that point, before getting out, I am to suffer myself to be hoodwinked. I will attend to the patient, and then allow my eyes to be bandaged again, until I am once more inside the coach. Am I right?"

"Exactly, sir," the man cried, with eager satisfaction. "And now let us be off. I will carry your luggage for you."

"Are there any bones out of joint?"

"No, sir—only broken ones—pretty well shattered, I'm afraid."

I thought it best to take my apparatus for setting broken limbs, which I had snugly packed in a long narrow box, and this I let my visitor take, while my amputating case I took under my own charge.

I was soon ready, and having called my boy to let him know that I might not be back till towards morning, I followed my conductor out to the street, where I found a coach, with a span of horses attached, the driver standing by their heads. The rain was falling in large drops, and the clouds hung as black as ink overhead, rendering the night about as dark as it could possibly be; but by the light from my surgery lamp I could see that the coach was a stranger to our part of the town. I had never seen such a one. I was sure it had come

from some distance. My friend helped me in, and having put the case of levers and splints in after me, he went and held a short consultation with his companion. Presently he came back, and asked if he might ride with me.

I told him certainly. I should like his company. He got in and closed the door behind him, and away we went. He offered no conversation, and I offered none. Had he been as wise as I should have been, under similar circumstances, he would have persisted in talking, at least, if I had not refused to listen; because thus he would have distracted my attention, and I could not have followed the route; but as it was, being left entirely master of my own reflections, I had nothing to do but to watch the way we were going.

Although I had been but a short time at Ashdale, yet I had ridden over nearly all the highways, and most of the byways, within a circuit of six or eight miles, and by paying strict attention, I believed I should be able to follow the route.

The coach started off to the southward, and was driven rapidly out from the village, crossing a narrow bridge that spanned the mill-stream at the lower end. A mile from there we crossed a longer bridge, that spanned a considerable river, of which the mill-stream was a tributary. Up a gentle eminence beyond the bridge, we came to a fork in the road. The road leading towards the south was very level and sandy, while that which bent round to the east was hard and not so even. We took the latter, and I knew that from this, there was no turn of any kind, until we reached a spot situated about a mile east of Ashdale; so if we did not stop on this road, then we should have ridden a distance of six miles to reach a point, which by the direct route lay only one mile from the point where we had started.

On we went, until at length we were descending a steep sandy hill. I knew that at a distance of some twenty or thirty rods from the foot of this hill, we should strike the main road at right angles, and at that point we were about one mile from my house. If we turned to the left, we should go towards home; if to the right, there were three branches from which to choose.

Very soon we reached a spot where the wheels of the coach seemed to run upon a soft carpet. We had turned to the right, and were upon a track built up with coopers' shavings. Not far from here we crossed a wooden bridge, and I knew that we had turned to the left at the first fork, and were now passing an iron foundry. Ten rods farther we turned to the right, and then rattled away upon a level road towards a deep wood.

And now my companion might have talked had he pleased, for I was upon a road I had never before travelled, though I knew very well which way it led. We kept on this way, pursuing, I was very sure, a direct course half an hour or so, and then stopped.

"All right," cried the driver, getting down from his box. And he would have opened the door, if my companion had not prevented him.

"It's been a long drive, doctor; but we came as quickly as I expected. And now, sir, if you'll allow me."

"Certainly," I responded, taking a handkerchief from my pocket. "Here is a bandage, I should prefer you would use it."

"Doctor, I will trust you to say when it is over your eyes fairly."

I had no earthly wish to play him false in so simple a matter, for had I driven the route in my own vehicle, by broad daylight, I could not have known more surely the location of my whereabouts, and I knew that on the morrow, if I so pleased, I could drive over to this very spot in just about one-third the time we had now taken.

So I put the handkerchief fairly over my eyes, and allowed him to tie it; then I was assisted from the coach, and led through a gateway—up a gravelled walk, to a house—into a narrow hall—up a flight of creaking stairs—off by a short passageway, where a door was opened, and I could feel that a bright light flashed upon me.

CHAPTER VII.

"THERE we are, doctor, safe and sound; and now—"

He had placed his hand upon the bandage for the purpose of removing it; but I heard an eager—"s-s-h!" and then the step as of some one hurrying to leave the apartment.

It was a female tread—a woman belonging to the house who did not wish to be seen by me. When she was gone, the bandage was removed, and I looked around.

The chamber was of goodly size; the floor bare; the walls covered with cheap paper; the ceiling dark with age and candle-smoke; the furniture scant and poor; the two small, low windows being

draped with blue curtains. Up against the wall, on the opposite side from the windows, stood a bed, upon which was a man, and standing over him with a bowl and a sponge was a companion. Two tin lamps were burning upon a pine bureau by the head of the bed, and it must have been good oil in them, for the light was white and clear.

The man upon the bed, I could see at a glance, was a stout, broad-shouldered fellow, and he was groaning in that tone which shows that nature has sustained about all the groaning she is capable of producing and bearing.

"Hallo, Will!" cried my conductor. "Here comes the doctor. Come, old fellow,—cheer up."

I cannot set down the reply of the man called Will. I think I never heard more oaths packed into an utterance of the same length.

"Tut, tut, Will; that isn't the way to receive a man who has come to do you a good turn."

"A good turn!" gasped the sufferer, with more oaths. "If he could have the privilege of hacking away at the bound that gave me this shot, I'd call it a good turn indeed. But where is he?—Eh, doctor,—is this you?"

When I looked upon the face that was turned up towards me from that pillow my heart was pained, and my soul awoke with keener sympathy. It was a handsome face—the face of a young man—certainly not more than two or three and twenty—with features regular and finely cut; skin pure and delicate; large, lustrous eyes; a brow high and full, back from which swept a mass of rich brown curls. If that man had been engaged in villainy, then some powerful influence, outside of his own desires, had led him on.

"Well, my friend," I said, tuning my words as kindly as possible, "I have come to help you if I can; and as true as I live I have a desire so to do."

The poor fellow tried to lift himself upon his elbow, but the effort failed, and a sharp cry of anguish told that the movement had cost him great pain. He recovered himself quickly, however, and with an imploring look he said to me:

"Doctor, for heaven's sake don't blow on me! I've suffered enough. And I've got to suffer more."

I looked once more into that youthful face, unstained as yet by crime, and I knew that he was not a villain. I don't know why I asked the question,—it framed itself in my thoughts, and out it came:

"Have you a mother living?"

There was a moment of death-like stillness, and then a great sob, convulsing his whole frame, broke from his bosom.

"Heavens!—do you know her?" he gasped.

"No," said I. "I know not if you have one."

He brushed his hand across his eyes and presently said:

"I'd rather die where I am,—I'd rather die a thousand times—than she should know of this! My mother thinks I am at honest work—thinks I'm earning money enough to buy a home for her poor old bones when she's past the wear and tear of toil for her daily bread. Why did you ask me of my mother?"

If I framed an answer to suit the occasion I meant it not for deception. I answered him:

"You are young and have time left for reform; and I was thinking if you had a mother living, I would do for her what I would not do for an incorrigible rogue."

"Eh! d'y'e mean that you wouldn't help me for myself?" he demanded with a look of real reproach.

"No, no," said I, "you misunderstand me entirely, I mean that, for your mother's sake, I might be induced to keep your secret, as though it were my own, no matter how dark may have been your crime, for I know full well that a deliberate murder never entered your thoughts."

"God bless you, doctor!" the poor fellow ejaculated, stretching out his hand again. "You've spoken the truth, so help me heaven!"

At this point the man who had ridden with me in the coach stepped nearer to the bed and offered a bit of his philosophy.

"Zounds, doctor, I don't exactly see why you should have such extra sympathy for a man's mother in preference to a man himself. Why, bless your body, I know thousands of mothers that are as much worse than poor Will here, as he is worse than the angels we read about."

"Ay," I retorted, turning upon him quickly, "but that kind of mothers don't give birth to sons like that. His mother was never a bad woman—never!"

The man upon the bed attempted to speak, but the effort only resulted in sobs and tears. Part of this emotion was maudlin, I knew, for the sufferer had been plied with whisky to deaden his sense of pain, but it was not all so. Only the weakness which pre-

* In surgery, those cases of importance, such as the amputation of limbs, the cutting into the neighbourhood of large arteries, and the like, are denominated "capital" operations; while the lesser operations come under the head of "minor surgery."

vented him from restraining his emotions was the result of his libations.

"Egad, but you're a keen one, ain't you?" muttered the dark-faced man. "Now, I'll bet a hundred pounds you'd take me for a rascal."

I looked up, and there was something so ridiculous in the expression of the fellow's heavily-bearded countenance that I laughed outright.

"I'll tell you what I take you for," I said, soberly, "howsoever great a rascal you may be, I believe you are a man who can keep his word."

"Gad, give us your hand on that, doctor!—it's the truth, I swear it is. I can tap a till, but I won't break my word with a friend."

By this time the man who had been watching with the sufferer had removed the clothing of the bed, and I prepared for the examination. I found it to be a gunshot wound, and about as bad a one as could be imagined. It must have been a heavy ball, for the right knee was shattered completely in pieces.

The shot had been discharged from a point directly in front of the victim; the ball had struck the patella or knee pan very near the centre; had crashed through the point of articulation, tearing off the condyles of the femur and severely lacerating the head of the tibia. Of course the ligaments were all torn from their attachments, the cartilage destroyed, and the synovial bursa, containing the lubricating fluid, entirely ruined. This amount of knowledge was the result of a protracted examination, during which I used the probe quite freely; but the wound was so large and gaping that I could feel nearly all the points of injury with my fingers, so there could be no mistake. The patient bore it all with wonderful fortitude, groaning occasionally, but never offering to move his wounded limb. And then the matter was rendered a great deal worse by the wound's having been inflicted on the previous night. It had been done nearly four-and-twenty hours, and of course much inflammation had set in. A compress clumsily, but effectively, placed upon the upper part of the leg, had stopped the flow of blood.

When I told him that he must lose his leg, he gave one low, painful groan, and closed his eyes as though ready for the work. We had no anæsthetic more powerful than whisky, and I asked him if he would have more of that.

"No," said he. "I'll have it off while I'm sober. I've had too many pains from drink to take it now to kill pain. Curses on the stuff! It's done for me all that you see, and much more. If it hadn't been for rum I'd never been here. If it hadn't been for rum my mother's son would never have been out here to have been cut up like this!"

"Fshaw!" cried the sandy-bearded man, with a vulgar oath. "What's the use of crying out against such a friend! Don't be down-hearted. We'll have many a social, merry chat yet over our glasses."

"Hold your peace, Jack Mullen," exclaimed the sufferer, with a flush of the face and a flash of the blue eyes. "You can go your own way henceforth. But I don't find fault. I don't blame you.—Come, doctor, if it's got to be done, the sooner it's over the better. But—if you could save my leg!"

I explained to him that the thing would be impossible. Should we leave the wounded parts, so fearfully lacerated, no amount of dressing could prevent immediate inflammation and mortification. It was a very simple proposition—as simple as "two and two make four"—the leg left—death. Take it off—and the chances were, life.

Since that hour I have performed many operations; but I never beheld another such specimen of courage and nerve. As I made the application of the tourniquet to the femoral artery, he gave a little groan, and after that he lay with his eyes closed, his hand clutching the clothes of the bed; his well foot pressed stoutly against the board, and his whole frame settled down to a state of utter immobility. I was not a great while performing the operation.

Having prepared my ligatures, and made up my mind where I would cut, I went at it with a bold hand, for there is no occasion for hesitancy here. The compression of the tourniquet alone rendered the cutting of an artery of no danger, and as blood enough flowed to tell me where it was when the knife had divided it, I had no difficulty in seizing and tying it. When all was complete, and I had used the sponge until the blood was under control, I turned down the flap, and it fitted exactly.

And when it was all done, and I had gathered up my instruments to wipe them, I asked my patient if it had hurt him much.

"I don't know," he said, and he spoke so honestly that it seemed the simple truth he was telling. "I wasn't thinking of the pain at all. Egad! you'd laugh, doctor, if I should tell you what I was thinking of. I was thinking of myself—and I said it in words—says I: 'Will Martin, this comes of rum! Don't you never touch it again.' And then I thought what would become of me if I could get clear of

this scrape without being nabbed by the law, and could live and be a honest man. It was a great picture, sir—a great picture—and the thoughts of it made me forget the pain. Oh heavens! if I can be a man once more, the loss of this leg wouldn't signify."

I conversed a while with the poor fellow, after his stump had been done up, and then turned to the dark-faced man who had been called Jack Mullen.

"Now, my dear man," I said to him, "we may as well make a change in our programme. I have conceived a strong liking for my friend upon the bed, and be sure I will never speak a word that can turn the eye of the law this way. I have done all you asked me to do, and though my curiosity must have been great to know how the accident happened, yet I have not troubled you with a question upon that point; and, furthermore, I seek to know none of your secrets; but two things are evident: Martin must have medical assistance; and I must come and render it. And now, sir, let me inform you that tomorrow morning—or, rather, this morning—for the last hour of the Sabbath is told—I could eat my breakfast, take out my horse, and drive directly to this door; and I should come by a route far more direct and short than that by which you brought me. You must remember that our country roads are different from your paved streets in the city. There are no two roads about here exactly alike, and most of them are widely different. We will have no more hoodwinking, sir, and I will come and see my patient just when I please."

"Ay," cried Will Martin, from the bed. He was very weak, but he had strength enough to notice that, and strength enough for reply. "Ay, ay, doctor,—come as often as you can."

I told him that I would if I could be permitted, and then I explained to Mullen that though the injured man seemed so strong now, notwithstanding the loss of blood, yet that he would be very low on the morrow, and that more or less fever must set in.

Mullen and the other man went out, and I supposed they had gone to confer with the driver, and as soon as the door was closed behind them I approached the bed.

"Will," said I, "you got this blow in London?"

"Yes," he answered.—"Eh; where is Mullen?"

"He and the other men have gone out."

"S-s-h! I'll tell you, doctor. A porter in the warehouse gave me this shot. It was a robbery. I was ahead. I had got into the window, and was going to open the street door. It was a big thing, sir. If it had come out all right, we'd have got nigh onto half a million in gold and jewels. It was the biggest pile of diamonds, and such kind of trap, that was ever in one lot—so them said that knew. But it failed. I was prepared for one watchman, and I'd floored him, and was just starting up to get the front door open, when a second man popped up from behind a low counter, and let drive at me with a blunderbuss. I felt the pain, and came near falling; but I had strength enough to knock the rascal down when he came up to me, and before he could get at me again, I got to the front door, and got it open. Ah—"

I had just time to seat myself when Mullen and his companion came in. It was all right as I had proposed, and I was suffered to follow them out without being hoodwinked. The rain was still falling, and the night was as dark as ever; but we were soon on our way, and we returned as we came—not this time to blind me, but to mislead others, who might have seen or heard the coach leave Ashdale, and who might also notice its return. The clock was just striking three when I entered my house, and Mullen was with me. My boy, Georgie, had left my lamp burning, with the wick turned down very low, and as I let on more light, my companion said to me:

"Now, doctor, I'm in a hurry; for we must have our coach out of this before the day breaks. We'll pay as we go,—or suppose I pay the whole now. If I give you one hundred pounds will you look to poor Will, till he is well?"

I told him I would do it for less than that. But that did not please him.

"A surgeon would have charged that for the simple job you've done, let alone the nature of the ride out, and the other service of secrecy we expect at your hands."

But I made him understand most emphatically that I took no pay for my secrecy. I had promised that I would keep my patient's secret; but I promised no farther in that direction. However, I would take the hundred pounds, and for that sum I would attend upon the wounded man till he was well.

He seemed satisfied, and proceeded to count me out one hundred pounds—giving me five twenty-pound notes. He smiled as he saw me look at them, and with a serious shake of the head he said:

"You needn't be afraid of it, sir. That's all honestly earned—that was. Every pound of it I won. I wouldn't give you anything that wasn't honest."

He had an exalted idea of honestly-earned money; but the simple fact of the money's having been won at a horse-race didn't cause it to burn in my pocket, so I put it away very calmly. The man remarked, as he went out, that he might never see me again; and if he did not, he wished me to feel the assurance that he should always hold me in grateful remembrance, and so forth.

I heard the coach roll away, and then I lighted my hand-lamp, and sought my bed.

And what do you suppose were the thoughts that occupied my mind after I had pressed my pillow? for I did not sleep for some little time. If I tell you, you'll declare that my habit of prognostication was running riot. But I shall tell you, nevertheless.

All three of the most important of my professional adventures, during my brief term of practice, I hinged together. What connection could there possibly have been, you will ask, between the sick woman at the honest cooper's and the beautiful girl at the mansion? Surely I could not have told you. And what between the shattered robber, away in the deep wood, and these other two? Upon my soul, I could not see. And yet, as I lay there in my waking-dream, with the three patients occupying my thoughts, I saw before me, as though pictured in lines of light upon the wall, a huge tunnel; and into the mouth thereof floated all the characters of the three scenes. The tunnel was of glass, and I could see the mingling and the working. Flames were emitted, and a light vapour that so beclouded the scene that for a time I could distinguish nothing, save that one after another of the characters began to disappear. At length the mass became luminous, and the human forms that had entered at the mouth assumed a great variety of kaleidoscopic forms, the radii growing smaller and smaller, until at length one form of all the multitude alone remained—a form clad in garments beautiful as the light of the stars—and it gracefully emerged from the outlet of the tunnel, wearing the form and features of Cordelia Larkton! How beautiful she was, and how sweetly she smiled upon me as she floated away upon the illumined air—floated away until she had passed from my sight—and my chamber was as dark as Erebus.

I opened my eyes to be sure that I was awake, and then gave myself up to sleep.

Of course my eyes had been closed during the passage of this mystic panorama, but my senses had been awake, for I was clearly cognizant of the pattering of the rain-drops upon my window the while.

(To be continued.)

THE famous ex-Zouave Jacob has, it is said, received a pension of 2,000 francs from the King of Prussia, for successful services rendered to a person of the Prussian Court dear to the King.

BADEN-BADEN is about to offer to its visitors the following amusements during the season—viz., in May, once a week a performance of an opera or of a play by the members of the Court Theatre at Karlsruhe; in June and July great concerts; in August, performances of the Comédie Française, of Paris; from August the 23rd up to September the 30th, hunting; from September the 1st up to the 7th, races and steeplechases; four theatrical performances by members of the Court Theatres of Berlin, Munich, and Hanover; from the 14th up to the 17th, Italian operas; from the 20th to October the 15th, several balls, parties, concerts, &c., and during the whole season fishing in the Rhine and in some rivers near Baden-Baden. It is singular that in its list of *agrémens* it forgets the gaming-tables. Modesty and delicacy perhaps.

THE WIND AND THE SUN.—A dispute once arose between the wind and the sun which was the stronger of the two, and they agreed to put the point upon this issue, that whichever soonest made a traveller take off his cloak should be accounted the most powerful. The wind began, and blew with his might and main a blast, cold and fierce as a Thracian storm; but the stronger he blew the closer the traveller wrapped his cloak around him, and the tighter he grasped it with his hands. Then broke out the sun; with his warm welcome beams he dispersed the vapour and the cold; the traveller felt the genial warmth, and as the sun shone brighter and brighter he sat down, overcome with the heat, and cast his cloak on the ground. Thus the sun was declared the conqueror; and it has ever been deemed that persuasion is better than force; and that the sunshine of a kind and gentle manner will sooner lay open a poor man's heart than all the threatenings and force of blustering authority.



[MRS. COURTNEY'S SYMPATHY.]

MICHELDEVER.

CHAPTER XIII.

M. LAPIERRE arose and left her to think over the mingled joy and sorrow he had left with her; and, between the two, the excited girl felt as if she must become hysterical; but she controlled herself, and, seeking her instrument, went into the simple dormitory in which her father slept.

The moonbeams were streaming through the open window, and Claire sat down in the soft light, and commenced her labour of love. She had often soothed him to sleep in the same manner, but never had her voice sounded to him so thrillingly sweet as on this night, though there was the sound of tears in it, as she gave utterance to the sublime strains that floated out on the still air in all their solemn beauty.

M. Lapierre lay half entranced by the melody, with his eyes fixed upon the fair face of the musician, mentally praying that she might be saved from all harm—that the life which lay before her might be one of purity and peace.

Alas, poor father! Heaven was good to remove him from the evil to come; yet, had a longer lease of life been granted him, he might, perhaps, have warded off the direst part of the fate that was already closing around his idolized child.

The old man found that the music excited, in place of calming him; and when Claire, at length, paused, and glanced towards the bed to see if he were sleeping, he said:

"That will do for to-night, my daughter. I shall sleep presently, but my nerves are so unstrung that your charming lullaby has not produced its usual sedative effect. Come and kiss me, and then go to rest yourself, for it is growing very late."

Claire came to his side, and, after kissing him several times, she sat down on a chair beside the bed, and said:

"I am not tired, papa, and if I went away it would only be to think by myself of what you so lately said. If you will let me stay with you awhile, I had rather be near you. Give me your hand, and I will see if I cannot magnetize you to rest."

He placed his hand in hers, and she started as she felt how cold and nerveless it felt. She held it between her soft palms, stroking it gently; and after a few moments, the restored circulation seemed to bring new vitality to it. Many times he clasped the slender fingers that sought to minister to him, murmuring blessings upon her, but gradually he seemed to sink

off into a quiet sleep; and softly disengaging her hand, Claire imprinted a light kiss upon his wrinkled brow and left the apartment.

It was very late before she slept herself that night—the feverish dread of the doom her father seemed to consider almost upon him, held in abeyance the thrill of joy with which she had learned that his views with regard to her long separation from her lover had undergone a change in their favour.

She scarcely thought of Thorne during those long hours of fear and doubt, for the dread was in her heart that the father who had been all the world to her for so many years might be snatched from her at any moment.

She shuddered as she remembered his words that night, and again seemed to feel the dull throb that vibrated through his breast, when she placed her hand upon it. She knew now that he was the victim of heart disease, which she had often heard him declare to be beyond the reach of medical skill.

Not long would this tender father be spared to her, and in the silence of the night Claire vowed to remain with him to the end, in spite of the entreaties of her betrothed, to share with him the beautiful life they had planned that evening beneath the quiet stars.

It was long past midnight before sleep came to weigh down her eyelids, and then she slumbered profoundly, for she was young and weary with the varied emotions of the day she had just passed through.

Claire was usually up with the sun, but the next morning she did not wake till old Betty came in, with an expression of bewildered fright upon her face and stood beside her couch. The woman laid her hand upon the sleeper's shoulder and, in a husky voice, said:

"It's late, Miss Claire; you must get up, for something's happened. Oh! that I should have such a tale as this to tell to this poor motherless child."

Claire started up wide awake at once, and the ashen-gray hue of Betty's face filled her with alarm. She rapidly asked:

"What is it? What can have happened to make you look so? You seem frightened. It is very late. I have overslept myself. Have you seen papa this morning? Though, of course, you have; he was not well last night, but I hope he is better to-day."

Claire spoke quickly, and almost at random, for something in the old woman's face had communicated to her mind an unspeakable dread of what was to follow.

"Yes, he's better—he's a deal better, but he ain't

up yet," said Betty, putting a strong constraint upon herself, for she feared the effect of the sudden announcement of the truth. "Get up, Miss Claire, and come to your breakfast; your papa don't want his yet awhile."

Claire sprang out of her bed, thrust her feet into a pair of slippers, and threw on a dressing-robe, as she hurriedly said:

"He is ill, then. I must go to him at once, and see what is the matter."

As she attempted to pass from the room, the old woman threw herself before her.

"Don't go now; your father don't want you yet. I've been in to see him, and he's—he's—"

She broke down, and, with a wild, affrighted look, Claire sprang past her, dashed through the intervening apartments, and entered that of her father.

M. Lapierre lay with his face turned towards the door, in the same attitude in which she had left him on the previous night. Even the hand she had placed upon his breast did not seem to have been moved from his position, and on his face was that look, but once seen on that of any creature of mortal mould—the ineffable serenity stamped there by the angel of death!

Claire knew the truth at once—his spirit had passed away as she glided from his room, believing that he only slumbered; and she sunk half insensible beside his inanimate form.

But the pang of this sudden bereavement again aroused her to a full sense of the calamity that had fallen upon her, and she cried out in her anguish:

"He is gone—gone away from me for ever. Ah, my father is cold—cold! and I left him to breathe away his life alone, with no one near him, to receive his last sigh—oh, I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it!"

Betty had followed her closely, and she now took her in her arms, as she had done when she was a child, and soothingly said:

"Don't take on so, my lamb. You have always been good to him, and I heard you playing to him last night to quiet him. Ah, he's quiet enough now, poor soul! but you mustn't break your poor heart."

Claire struggled faintly, but the old woman held her firmly in her grasp, and she at length submitted to be borne from the chamber of death.

When she had placed her young mistress upon her bed, Betty said:

"There, you may cry as much as you like now, my precious, but you mustn't go back. I have sent Pluto up to the Grange to tell what has happened

here, and somebody will be down directly to attend to things."

"Then—then you have known it for some time! Why was I not called earlier? I shall never forgive myself for caring for any one else more than I did for him. He has loved me all his life, too, and he has broken his heart because I permitted another to come between us. I know it is so, and I do not deserve ever to be happy."

"Don't talk that way, Miss Claire. Now, my Rosebud, put on your clothes and arrange your hair, for Jerome will be here before long, and I know he'll want to see you."

"Yes, I must see him," said Claire. And she mechanically arose, and, with Betty's assistance, made her toilette.

This was scarcely accomplished, when the sound of a carriage stopping at the gate was heard, and in a few more moments the bereaved girl was pressed to the heart of her maternal friend. Claire related to her all that had taken place on the previous night, after her god-mother had left her, and after calming her emotion as much as possible, Mrs. Courtney said:

"Your father has lately had a strong presentiment of his approaching fate, but he did not expect his summons so soon. He talked with me about his death, and arranged what was to be done with you in such an event. You are my child now, Claire, by the desire of your father. I am to stand in the place of a parent to you. My dear love, you know that, as far as I can, I will be as tender a protector as he who has left us."

"Yes, he told me. You are very good, mamma, and I love you dearly; but no one can be to me what my poor father was. Yet I left him to die alone—I slept while he lay cold and lifeless so near me. Ah, why could not some good spirit have been sent to warn me of his condition, that I might have gone to him and tried to save him."

"My love, such regrets are natural to one so suddenly bereaved as you have been, but no effort of yours could have arrested the blow. You could have done nothing for him—his death was painless, for it is evident that he passed from sleep into the rest prepared for those who love and serve heaven. You know that your father was a good Christian, and the thought that he is now with the spirits of the blessed made perfect should console you. There, my child, bow your head upon my breast, and weep till the fountain of your tears is exhausted, but do not take blame to yourself for what you could not help."

Thus soothing and caressing the afflicted daughter, Mrs. Courtney passed an hour, and she succeeded in calming the first violence of her grief. Jerome then came in to see her, and the tender sympathy he manifested for her—the divine consolations he offered her—at length quieted the tempest of remorse, for Claire in her heart believed that the events of the last two weeks had hastened the fate of her father. Thorne came later in the day, but she refused to see him, and he was glad to escape from the gloomy house of mourning and return to the Grange.

Arrangements were made for the funeral, and, on the second day after his decease, M. Lapierre was laid to rest in the graveyard of the Courtney family, beside the young wife who had been waiting there for him nearly fifteen years!

The old house was left to the care of Betty and her husband, and Claire returned home with Mrs. Courtney, to remain with her as the child of her adoption.

In that interval she had scarcely seen Thorne, but he had daily written her most affectionate and sympathetic letters, which went farther towards consoling her, than all the tender kindness lavished on her by her god-mother. Yet if Thorne's heart had been looked into, Claire would have found there little real grief for the loss she had sustained. Isolated and lonely as she now was, he felt almost certain that he could triumph over such opposition as she could offer to a clandestine marriage, and he did not despair of bringing Jerome over to his side.

He had spared no efforts to win the golden opinion of Jerome. He had professed his willingness to be convinced by his arguments in favour of his own church, for it was of little importance to Walter Thorne what sect of Christians he nominally belonged to. To gain the desire of his heart he would have become a Mussulman or a Parsee with equal indifference. Claire was the deity he worshipped, and in his heart was no thought of the sacredness of the pledges he was so ready to give, provided they would enable him to carry out his own views.

On the day after M. Lapierre's decease, he occupied his time in writing replies to the letters he had received. To Wingate he wrote the following lines:

"HAPPY VALLEY, August 1, 18—.

"DEAR BOB,—You have been true to me in one

sense, and treacherous in another. In the name of all the furies, why did you betray anything to the old man? Don't you know well enough what a firebrand he is, and how unreasonable he can be in his tantrums.

"I have a disgusting letter from him, threatening all sorts of absurd penalties if I do not return home at once, and play the part of a dutiful son; a mawkish one from Agnes, throwing herself fairly at my head, and reminding me that I am bound to her in honour.

"After all, still and cold as she seems, she has courted me more than I have her, and I submitted like a fool to have the net thrown over me, which she is ready to tighten, till there will be no escape from it.

"You don't know what it is to have love pulling you one way, and interest another; for it would be a serious thing with me, if the governor were to carry out his threats, and really disinherit me. Reading over your letter of remonstrance, and pondering on his too plainly-expressed intentions, has brought me face to face with the reality of the risk I have been so ready to run, and I am consequently partially restored to reason.

"I have left the house of the old Frenchman, and am at present at the Grange, as the guest of its mistress, a middle-aged lady, with whom I am not likely to fall in love. So much for the prudence of my course.

"I am not yet well enough to travel, but I shall leave this neighbourhood as soon as possible, and complete the tour I sketched out for myself in the beginning of the summer. I shall not return to L— till the time appointed for my marriage approaches, for neither my father nor Agnes shall abridge the few weeks of freedom left me. I will write to them both, and set their fears at rest, so far as my good faith to them is concerned.

"The letters you so cleverly forged have been destroyed, so you need have no uneasiness about them. I am much obliged to you for complying with my wishes in reference to them; but it was a useless trouble so far as I am concerned. The young girl with whom I was so deeply infatuated, is to go to France in a few months to complete her education; so you see that I am safely out of that scrape, serious as it threatened to be.

"Since you made mischief with the old man, the best you can do is to set him right about this affair, and dissipate the storm you have raised. You may direct your reply to Richmond, as I contemplate a visit there, and I shall not linger much longer in the Happy Valley. Yours, repentingly, W. THORNE."

"That will do, I think, he muttered, as he glanced over the lines he had written. "Wingate has served my turn, and now he must have dust thrown in his eyes like the others. I shall leave the Happy Valley, but I will take with me all that I value in it. I will not be baffled in that, come what will in the future. And now for the old man."

He seized his pen again, and, with a sneer on his handsome face, wrote:

"HAPPY VALLEY, August 1, 18—.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—Your strange letter in before me, and I must confess that I was surprised and hurt by its contents. I do not know what Wingate may have told you to put you in so violent a passion, but whatever it was can be readily explained by me.

"I met with an accident that was near being fatal, and was ill in consequence of it. I was received into the house of an old French emigré, and his daughter, a mere child, but a very pretty one, was my nurse. I was very grateful to her; but the rhapsody I wrote to Bob must have been penned under the influence of partial delirium. I have not now the slightest recollection of what I said, but, of course, it was wretched nonsense.

"I was so unfortunate, it seems, as to mislead Wingate as to the warmth of my feelings towards this young girl, and when your letter came, I felt that I had been very foolish to write to him as I did.

"You need have no uneasiness concerning me, for I have left the old man's ruinous abode, and am now the guest of a middle-aged lady, whose love for art induced her to offer me her hospitality. As soon as I have gained my strength sufficiently to resume my wanderings, I shall leave the valley, and complete the tour I planned before setting out from home, so you need not expect me back before the time agreed upon.

"I can easily make all right with Agnes, who, by the way, has counselled me to pay my kind entertainers liberally. I am most anxious to take her advice, and I beg that you will send me a handsome remittance for that purpose. Having thus discharged my debt, I will shake the dust of the valley from my feet, and go upon my way.

"Your affectionate son,

"WALTER THORNE."

"And now for my last and most difficult task," he thought. "How am I to set the jealous fears of Agnes at rest, and at the same time not commit myself? I do not know that she would use my letter against me, but she might, and I should be in a pretty scrape. She is not a woman to be elighted and thrown off with impunity, but her pride will surely prevent her from suing me for breach of promise. I must be loverlike, or her jealousy will blaze up and spoil my game at the outset. I know that I'm getting into an awful mess; but I'll risk being blown sky-high to gain such a dainty, darling little Rosebud as the one I have found here. When it is done, and she is mine beyond recall, those who have lured me into this other entanglement may make the best of it."

In spite of his lightness of nature and lack of truth, Walter Thorne shrank from the task before him. With a face strongly expressive of disgust he wrote:

"HAPPY VALLEY, August 1, 18—.

"MY DEAREST AGNES,—Your letter, containing so much that is soothing to my heart, and also much that is bitter to my pride, came safely to hand, and I need not tell you with what eagerness it was read—with what interest each sentence written by your hand was dwelt on.

"My dear girl, I was sorry to see what influence Wingate's nonsense had with you. He does not always stop to consider the effect his words may have, and he often jumps to conclusions that facts will not justify.

"I should have written to you, in place of him, and told you of the accident that had happened to me, but I was suffering from fever, and my mind was not clear enough to venture on doing so. I must have sent him a precious lot of nonsense, which he should have kept to himself, and I was surprised to find that he had not done so.

"I had a narrow escape from drowning the day I entered this enchanting valley, and the drenching I had made me quite ill. I have been nursed by good Samaritans, to whom I am very grateful, and one of them, as you have been informed, was a young girl, of whom you condescend to be jealous.

"My dear Agnes, if you could see what a mere child she is, how uninformed and ignorant of the world and its ways, you would lay aside all your fears as to my constancy to yourself.

"You will be convinced how unfounded they are, when I tell you that I have left her father's humble home, and am now the guest of Mrs. Courtney, a wealthy widow, with a grown-up son, who has kindly invited me to remain in her house till my convalescence is complete.

"It is not, however, my intention to linger here much longer, for I wish to continue the tour this accident has interrupted, and I shall bring you back some charming sketches of the scenery I have passed through. I asked for three months of perfect freedom, and it was granted by yourself and my father, and I shall hold you both to your agreement.

"After my marriage I can scarcely take so wild and rambling a tour as this has been, for you would expect me to settle down and play the part of a dutiful Benedict, so pray do not seek to abridge the few weeks I can devote to my art with a clear conscience.

"By the fifteenth of October I shall make my appearance in L—, ready to complete the most important event in my life. Till then, adieu, dear Agnes, and cease to torment yourself with jealous fears concerning me. I am a man who cannot be chained down by conventional rules, and I should only recoil from those who attempted to control my freedom of action. At the time mentioned you will see me in L—, and my destiny will then be settled.

Yours truly,

"W. THORNE."

With a clouded brow and compressed lips he read over what he had written, and muttered:

"It is the best I can do, but it is unsatisfactory. It commits me decidedly, yet it will not entirely reassure that jealous and exacting girl. I escaped from her because I knew she'd tie me down to her apron-string, and expect me to play the part of a puling, love-sick idiot. Heighho! I begin to think I had better have done that, than have come here to risk all my prospects in life, for the sake of a bewitching little angel, without a shilling of her own. I wish I could break away from Rose, and do the honourable by Agnes, but that is impossible. The die is cast by the old man's death, and if my charmer will consent to go with me, I will risk everything for her possession. If she refuse, why then I'll go back, and sacrifice myself upon the altar of Mammon, to please the governor."

Thus ruminating, Thorne closed and addressed his letters, and then busied himself upon a picture he was painting.

A picturesque ruin, with its ivy-crowned walls, stood in the background, with a narrow stream, spanned by a rustic bridge in front. On its margin stood a young girl holding a spray of roses in her hand: Claire, in all her budding beauty, looked out from the canvas, and Mrs. Courtney, for whom it was designed as a parting present, had declared the likeness perfect.

If he stole from her the child of her adoption, the artist thought it would be but a fair exchange, to give her the shadow for the substance, and he worked on with smiling lips and love-lit eyes.

As the fair features glowed into life beneath his touch, the soft clear eyes looked into his own, he thought only of Claire, and the means of winning her consent to a secret union, for he felt assured that Mrs. Courtney would not forego her own plans for the future welfare of her ward.

Now or never must he win her, and in his egotistic selfishness he refused to listen to such doubts as suggested themselves, as to how the object of his headlong passion might fare when he became the master of her fate. What was he preparing for her, for himself, in the future? He could not answer that question satisfactorily, so he ignored it altogether, and only planned for the immediate gratification of the wish he had most at heart—to make this trusting child irrevocably his own.

Thorne believed that he could win over Jerome so completely that he would not refuse to pronounce the blessing of the church over them, even without the knowledge of Mrs. Courtney. He was aware that Jerome disapproved of long engagements, and he felt sure that he was anxious to secure so good a match as he believed himself to be for the daughter of his old friend. So he doubted not that he should eventually succeed in his plans.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER a few days, Claire began to recover from the first stunning effects of the blow that had fallen upon her; but she was still so deeply depressed that Mrs. Courtney was alarmed for her health. She appeared so languid and hopeless that nothing seemed to interest her; but, at length, her kind friend induced her to leave her room, and, with some reluctance, called on Thorne to aid her in bringing back some portion of the young girl's former fire and animation.

At first, even he found this a difficult task, but gradually the magnetic power he wielded over her made itself felt, and, under its influence, the colour returned to her cheeks, the light to her dimmed eyes.

For a few days Claire thought of her love for Walter Thorne almost with terror, for she believed it was the knowledge of that, which had struck a death-blow to her father's heart. It was true that M. Lapiere might have died any day, but she knew that, if agitation had been spared him, he might have lived on for months or years to come.

But, as the days passed on, that remorseful thought grew dim, and soon it almost ceased to grieve her, under the renewed infatuation that filled her whole being, to the exclusion of every other feeling. In the wide world Claire saw but one refuge for her—and that was in the love of this man who so tenderly wooed her to his heart.

Her father had repented of his opposition to an early union, and now no one should stand between them—no, not even the maternal friend who was so anxious to save her from a too precipitate marriage.

He saw her revive under his skillful charming—saw the light of home and love reappear in her lovely eyes—the pale cheeks again kindle into bloom beneath his ardent glances—and, one evening when he stood alone with his hostess on the terrace, he said to her:

"You can see for yourself, madam, that your young charge must go with me. She will droop and fade away on your hands, if you insist on sending me away from her. It would be a cruel experiment to attempt such a thing."

Mrs. Courtney coldly replied:

"Yet, it is one I must make, Mr. Thorne. I stand in the place of a mother to this poor girl, and I must do by her as I would do by my own daughter. I shall not remain here after you go away. Jerome needs better medical advice than the valley affords, for I begin to perceive a failure in his mind that alarms me. I am afraid it is softening of the brain, brought on by overwork, from which he is suffering. Claire needs change, too, and I think I shall spend the autumn and winter in France. I shall place both her and Julia in a good boarding-school, till my son is free to accompany me to France."

"This is something quite new to me, madam. What does Jerome say to your plan for his benefit? I have myself remarked what you speak of, and I think his mind is certainly losing its balance."

"Jerome approves it, and he will take up his abode

with an intimate friend; but I own that I have many doubts as to his ultimate recovery. He should be placed under medical treatment as soon as possible."

A cloud settled on the face of the listener, and he curtly said:

"If my presence here be any drawback to the carrying out of your wishes, Mrs. Courtney, I will make arrangements to leave immediately. I regret that I have not been earlier informed of them, for I should be sorry to become *de trop* in your house."

"Nor have you been so, Mr. Thorne. I invited you hither of my own free will, and I have enjoyed your society much; but I cannot shut my eyes to the necessity of removing Claire from your presence as soon as possible. The greater your power over her, the stronger seems the need of placing her where you cannot be daily and hourly near her. Her spirits have in a measure recovered their tone, and she is now able to bear the separation from you. She will be permitted to correspond with you regularly, for I do not forget that her father sanctioned the engagement between you. But you must pledge me your word not to seek her till we are on the eve of embarking for France."

"Indeed, madam, this is asking too much of me. I cannot consent to an arrangement that will separate my betrothed from me, and place her under the control of teachers who would regard the very fact of our engagement with a species of horror. It will be too severe an ordeal for Claire to pass through, for she is not strong, and—and she only lives in my presence. You can see that for yourself, madam."

Mrs. Courtney steadily replied:

"I have seen with regret how utterly her will is dominated by yours, and that is why I must remove her from your influence. It is a duty I owe to her. New friends and new scenes will gradually restore her to her natural condition, and she will learn to love you reasonably, without bending before you, as if you were an ideal incarnation of perfection. Such love as that, does not bring happiness to the woman who cherishes it, nor yet to him on whom it is bestowed. Claire, like all girls of her age, is full of romantic nonsense; but, if she were permitted to marry you now, the real man would fall so far below the ideal she has formed of you, that a fatal reaction in her feelings might take place. I have known girls to marry under such hallucinations, and end by heartily wishing that fate had severed them from the object of their choice, before the church had irrevocably bound them to a destiny that proved far from happy."

"And you think it possible that such a change could take place in the heart of the girl I adore?" exclaimed the lover, with much heat.

With irritating calmness, Mrs. Courtney replied:

"I am only discussing possibilities, Mr. Thorne. I believe that you and Claire are ardently attached to each other, and I think you would try to make her happy in your own way. But she is too unformed—too much of a child yet—to risk taking upon herself the duties of a wife and mistress of a family. It was but the other day that she was chasing butterflies with Julia, as much a child in heart as she is. Indeed, you must consent to give her up to me, as has already been settled; and I wish you to understand that I will not recede from that. I love Claire almost as if she were my own daughter, and she has no one but me to look to in this crisis of her destiny. I shall be ready and willing to surrender her to you when the proper time arrives, and I think that is as much as you can reasonably expect of me."

Thorne controlled his annoyance, and with a faint smile, replied:

"But I am not reasonable, Mrs. Courtney, nor do I think you expect a man as much in love as I am to be so. I must yield to your authority, I suppose, but you will not banish me before your plans are quite settled. You must let me bask yet a little while in the sunshine of my darling's reviving spirits, for it will not be well for her to be too suddenly separated from me."

"I have no wish to send you into exile, Mr. Thorne, till the time for my own departure draws near. I shall be happy to claim you as my guest for the next three weeks. That will bring the middle of September, and that will be soon enough to settle ourselves for the autumn and winter."

"Thank you for conceding so much; and now I will seek Claire, and tell her what you have determined upon. Have you spoken of your removal to her?"

"Not yet. If you choose, you can repeat to her what I have just said."

Mrs. Courtney left him, and went to her own apartment, where she found Julia playing with a pet kitten. She detained her child near her that the lovers might have an uninterrupted interview, never dreaming that Thorne would abuse her indulgence, by

tempting the yielding and loving Claire to abjure her authority, and even win her consent to deceive the only true friend she possessed.

He found the object of his search in the library, lying listlessly upon a sofa drawn near an open window. She was paler than usual, and the deep black in which she was robed, the sad composure of her face, seemed to have added several years to her age. Claire looked up as she heard his step, and light came back to her dark eyes, smiles to her sad lips. She sat up and arranged her dress, and he placed himself beside her. He tenderly said:

"You are almost yourself again, *petite*. I have been very unhappy about you, but your old animation seems to be coming back, I am glad to see. But tell me, love, would you not fade and droop again if my presence were withdrawn from you? I am vain enough to think so."

She regarded him with a half-frightened expression.

"You have not come to tell me that you must go away? Oh, Walter, how can I bear to lose sight of your dear face now he is gone? You will not, you cannot, be so cruel as to desert me when I am almost your own!"

The word died on her lips, but he drew her to his heart and whispered:

"Almost my wife—yes; but not quite, my angel. Only consent to become such, and no one shall stand between us. No one, Claire, for the right to claim you is mine. Mrs. Courtney is your friend, and she wishes to do what she thinks right, but she is planning to take you from me, and place you in a boarding-school till she sets out on her foreign tour. You will be shut up with stupid people, who will have no sympathy for you. They will exact difficult tasks from you, when you might be with me so happy, so adored. Oh! my love—my sweet love, only listen to my prayer, and I will remove you from her control. I will devote myself to your happiness."

"Are you quite certain of this, Walter?" she asked, in a faint voice.

"Quite—for Mrs. Courtney told me so herself, and allowed me to seek you, and break her intentions to you. Dear Claire, I shall be wretched without you, and of what value will be accomplishments, purchased at such cost to us both? After we are married, you shall have masters, if you wish it; but if we take our fate in our own hands, it must be without the knowledge of your protectress. She has no legal claim on you, yet she is firm in her determination to withhold you from me for years to come."

Claire raised her head, and after a pause said:

"Walter, it is right that I should tell you what papa said to me the night he left me for ever. He seemed to have changed his mind with reference to our marriage, and he said it might be best for us to be united without delay. If he had lived, I think he would have consented to give me to you before you left the valley."

The lover listened to this revelation in delighted surprise.

"If that be so, Claire, you cannot hesitate to do as I wish. The blessing of your dead father will be upon us, and we can dispense with the consent of Mrs. Courtney."

"But I owe a great deal to mamma. She has been very kind to me throughout all my life."

"True, love; but your first duty is to me. Everything depends on our immediate union, Claire. My father will withdraw his consent, I am almost certain, if I do not bring him his new daughter when I return home. Only consent to our marriage, and your friend will forgive and receive you again when it is over. Oh, darling, if I lose you, I shall be the most wretched of men."

She softly said:

"And I the most desolate of creatures, separated from you, taken from the scenes I love, and thrust among strangers. I could not live through such an ordeal, I know I could not."

"Such is also my conviction, and I said as much to Mrs. Courtney, but she insists that you will find change of scene all that is necessary to restore your health and spirits. An exhilarating change she proposes! She will remove you from the freedom of your country life, and shut you up in dingy rooms, with books for your companions, the drudgery of study your only occupation. Contrast that with what I offer you, Claire, and make your decision."

He could scarcely have conjured up a more repulsive picture before the mind of the thoughtless creature who listened to him. She had never been compelled to study anything; the lessons set for her by her indulgent father had been learned or neglected, as suited her own fancy, and but for the quick perceptions and retentive memory with which nature had endowed her, Claire would have acquired very little.

But these had enabled her, in a desultory way, to

gain as much cultivation as girls of her age usually possess, and the library at the Grange had afforded her a wide range of reading, of which she had eagerly availed herself.

(To be continued.)

THE VEILED PICTURE.

AN invalid for years, my physician and friends at last decided that I should try a tour of the Continent, and, nothing loth, I commenced my pilgrimage. A short sojourn in sunny France, a few weeks at the far-famed springs of Germany, had added something to my slender strength, but health, often the shyest coquette when most earnestly wooed, danced before me, decked in her most charming colours, just near enough to lure me on, but still eluding my grasp. So it happened that one beautiful morning in June, 18—, I awoke in Italy.

All the romance in my composition, of which there is not a little, had for years centred in this beautiful land, and a visit to its shores seemed the very acme of earthly enjoyment. Could it be possible that I was really here, in the body, or, as I had often been before, was I the sport of the spirits of dreamland? Soon the soft, perfumed air, stirring my curtains, on which was borne the vine-dresser's song, assured me that the reality of many a day-dream and night-vision was now within my grasp.

I arose from my bed to discover that my weariness had caused me to keep rather late hours. Making a hasty toilet I descended to the breakfast-room, where I found my landlady and a note, which my chaperon had left for me. He had imagined me entirely unfitted for sight-seeing by fatigue, and, tempted by an excellent escort, had gone on a ride over the hills, forming a background to the beautiful stretch of country which met my gaze when I stood at the window.

Here, then, was an end of the airy castles which had grown since my waking, for in the excitement and joy of finding myself in this storied land, I had forgotten fatigue, and was all anxiety to get out on a tour of observation.

Every possible arrangement had been made for my comfort, yet I felt half vexed at my friend's absence, and was disposed to chide him for a want of interest in my wishes. Before my last cup of coffee was disposed of, however, I had scolded myself roundly for my most unreasonable ill-humour, and exonerated him from all blame. Then came another idea. Why could I not take a stroll alone? Surely I need not confine myself to the house for want of a guide. I could note my way, and if at a loss, my limited acquaintance with Italian, and perfect knowledge of the French language, would certainly serve me in discovering my whereabouts.

Not supposing my landlady would take much note of me or my movements until the dinner-hour, long before which I purposed being in my apartment again, I said nothing to her of my intentions, but sallied forth.

The blue waters of the Mediterranean had a charm for me, and I accordingly took a direction which I supposed would bring me to its shores. The clear blue sky, the soft wind which kissed the cheek caressingly, the novelty of the whole scene, the strange dresses of those I met, all possessed a fascination, and caused me to take no note of distance.

A last I stood upon a piece of rising ground from which the object of my walk was plainly visible. But to my great disappointment the street seemed to end in a quay, crowded with busy men unloading a vessel.

I was annoyed at such a matter-of-fact end to my search for romance, and hesitated a moment whether to advance or retrace my steps. An elegant marble building to the left obstructed my view, and I decided to walk down, hoping I should find a way round it, which would still gratify my desire for a fine outlook over the sea, and give me the advantage of a new route back.

As I neared the quay I was greatly surprised to find the narrow footway growing still narrower, until I came to a stand-still at the foot of a flight of marble steps leading to the mansion I had observed above.

I did not care to go into the crowded street, so I mounted the steps to reconnoitre, and then found a descending flight on the other side, leading into an enclosure, at the foot of which there was a small iron gate.

As I stepped down these, and passed towards the gate, I noticed at the window a beautiful young woman, holding in her arms an infant boy. I never can pass a handsome baby without evincing my admiration of it, and a smile of pleasure consequently reached this little cherub. Indeed, the appearance of mother and child was like a vision of beauty in a wilderness, and I longed to make their

acquaintance, but fearing I might be considered an intruder, I passed on to the little gate.

In vain I endeavoured to discover the secret of its fastenings; it baffled all my attempts to open it. Presently the sash was thrown open, and a sweet voice called in the most musical Italian:

"Stay, signora; I will send some one."

I turned to thank the speaker, when she added: "You are a stranger and weary; will you not rest a little?"

The kind offer was most gratefully accepted, for I was truly very tired, and my obligation was then increased by placing before me some fruit and wine.

If you want thoroughly to appreciate the scriptural virtue of hospitality, find yourself its recipient when a stranger in a strange land. If it does not then stir your heart, you must be sadly destitute of that important organ.

Much refreshed by the timely kindness of my fair hostess, I explained my appearance alone, and warmly thanking her arose to leave.

"No, no, rest," said she, "you are pale. English, are you not?"

Upon my replying in the affirmative, she added:

"I have a brother in your country, my only one. He belonged to the liberals here, and offended the governing powers; hence he fled and found a home among your people. I love all the English for his sake."

With such a basis our acquaintance grew rapidly. I gratified her desire for knowledge of my own country, our customs and society, and she discovered the enthusiasm with which I had set foot upon the soil of her native land.

"The signora shall not go back to her friends without seeing something," said she. "My husband and I are cousins. By our union the family estates came to us undivided, but the fortune of our ancestors has been dissipated by years, and we cannot keep up their style. Our picture gallery, however, my husband cherishes. If you will come with me there you can rest and be amused."

An exclamation of delight escaped me as we entered the gallery. The collection was large and elegant, and I felt that I could easily spend days there. But before one painting I stood as though spell-bound. Two life-sized figures seemed to stand out from the canvas. One was a hard-featured, middle-aged man, his rich dress betokening high rank, his arms outstretched, his countenance expressive of angry disappointment and baffled desire, as he gazed upon the faultless face of a young girl who seemed to stand upon a cloud. A light mist enhanced rather than concealed the pure outlines of her features. Her unbound hair floated back from her face like golden ripples lighted by the setting sun. The whole figure was so life-like and so ethereal in its misty veil, that you almost expected to see her float away from sight. Called to look at others, my eyes reverted to this, and I gave but indifferent attention to the lady's kind explanations.

Noticing my fascination she said with a smile: "Ah, signora, that is a gem—our chief treasure." "It seems a living story," said I; "it must have a history."

"Right, lady; rest and I will tell you," she answered, piling up the cushions upon a low divan opposite the picture.

Reclining on these, with the beautiful narrator on a low seat at my side, I listened to the following story:

"Nearly a century ago these halls, with all the country around, were the property of the Duke of M—. His portrait hangs yonder. He was proud and haughty, yet softened by an almost unbounded love for his only daughter, who was known far and wide as Ginletta, the beautiful lady of M—. He was noted as a liberal patron of the fine arts."

"During a visit to a neighbouring duchy, he saw and was greatly pleased with the work of a young painter as yet unknown to fame. Returning, he sent for him to take the likeness of his daughter. Obedient to the summons Signor Giovanni came and immediately commenced his task. The picture grew in beauty and in life-likeness day by day, to the great delight of the duke, who, unbending from his haughty demeanour, was warm in his praises of the artist and his success."

"There was another result, however, which the duke, strangely enough, had not attempted to provide against, probably deeming it too preposterous to be even imagined. But it came none the less surely. From the unrestrained daily intercourse of the two young people, love, as ever ignoring all difference in worldly position, took possession of both hearts. She won from him his story. The younger scion of a noble house, he had fallen under the displeasure of his elder brother, because of his, as the brother deemed it, unprofitable devotion to art. He had been repeatedly urged to enter upon a more lucrative calling, but steadfastly refusing, he had been

cast off as incorrigible, and left to work his own way. Toil and poverty thus became his inheritance, but youth, with its bright hopes, sustained him, and of late the patronage of the noble seemed to open to him the door of success."

"Not many days more elapsed before the duke discovered the state of affairs, and summoned the poor artist in great displeasure, berating him in no measured terms for his abuse of kindness, in thus attempting to rob him of his pearl—the glory of his house. 'You disgrace your profession by conduct so contemptible—so perfidious.'

"'Nay, nay,' answered Giovanni, 'you do me wrong; your daughter is as beautiful as a painter's dream, while every womanly grace within her is enthroned. It is not marvellous that my heart bowed before her, but I did not hope to win her love. I did not hope that she would care for me, more than for others of the lone and sorrowful.'

"The duke felt he had made a mistake, and as he marked the noble carriage and clear eyes of the young man, he asked in a more respectful tone:

"Do you mean to say, then, signor, that no word of this love which my daughter has inspired has passed your lips to her?"

"I do," was the quiet reply.

"I ask your pardon; I wronged you," exclaimed the duke, extending his hand. 'The portrait is unfinished, and I wished you to execute some other pieces for me. Can I rely upon you that you will not betray this attachment to its object, if you remain under my roof?'

"If it had been as I thought—yes," answered the artist. 'But if as you suppose, and I recall many things trivial in themselves, which indicate that you are correct in your judgment of her feelings, I could not trust myself. No, I will go away from here, and with such a prize in view I will win for myself a name that even the proud house of M—shall not despise.'

"The duke was chagrined. Where had slumbered the fact he so prided himself upon, that he had thus aroused all the fire in the young spirit before him? He could not but admire the nobility of soul which had displayed itself in his words and manner, while with no lack of respect his position was thus clearly defined. He felt that the young man was right, but he answered coldly:

"Then we must part." "Turning to his escritoire he counted out in gold the sum due, and with a courteous farewell Giovanni left his presence."

"Long the duke sat, the shadows of perplexing thought chasing each other over his knit brow. He liked the artist, and he had set his heart upon his paintings, especially the unfinished portrait. He was vexed that the two must needs fall in love, and vexed with himself that he had not foreseen the possibility, and when his suspicions were aroused, that he had acted with undue haste and heat."

"Then, how was the evil to be remedied? He knew that with all her gentleness there slumbered in his daughter's heart all the fire and spirit of her proud race, which opposition might rouse. One ray of hope remained; the young man was gone, and perhaps she had not divined his secret; if so, her pride would prompt the erasure of his image from her mind."

"He had long desired a union of his own and the wealthy house of B—. Its sole representative was rather too advanced in years to attract the fancy of a young maiden, yet he had urgently pressed his suit with the father. Hitherto he had declined influencing his daughter's choice. Now he would send for the Duke of B—, and exercise his parental authority. The pure blood of the M—'s should not be tainted with a plebeian stream, to gratify the whim of a foolish girl."

"To resolve with the duke was to do, and a messenger was at once sent with a despatch, while he awaited his friend's arrival."

"Meanwhile a scene had transpired which, could the duke have witnessed it, would have added both to his vexation and perplexity. When Giovanni left his presence, he went at once to the gallery to pack up his brushes and colours. The task accomplished, he uncovered the portrait and gazed long and earnestly upon it. The face was perfect, only the drapery remained to be completed. As he gazed, all the hopelessness of his deep love forced itself upon him. Perhaps he did not even know of the place she held in his heart; if she did, and if she returned it, of what avail were their two loves before the pride and power of her father? Though of a noble house he was untitled and poor, and would not the most illustrious names and the richest dowries in all Italy be laid at her feet? The strong man, who had borne himself so loftily in the late interview, now bowed, and sinking upon a chair he gave way to intense grief. From this he was aroused by the sweet voice of Ginletta, asking in startled surprise:

"What means this, signor?"
 "With a powerful effort at self-control he arose as she spoke, and answered:
 "I go, lady, immediately."
 "Go!" said Ginletta, the blood receding from her face, leaving her as pale as marble; "go where? What has happened?"

"Giovanni raised his eyes to her face. There was no mistaking the deep interest written on every feature. Then the pent-up torrent burst forth. His words, clothed in all the burning eloquence of true affection, called up the tell-tale tide, and cheek and neck glowed with the crimson dye. Seeing in her agitation the confirmation of his most sanguine hopes, he caught her in his arms, but then burst from him the heart-breaking cry:

"Hopeless, hopeless! Why did I thus permit myself to shadow your young life? And he recounted his late interview with the duke.

"Courage, Giovanni," she whispered. "My father has always said that he would never force me to leave him, that I should never marry against my own will. Go, win the name that may be yours. I will wait until you come to claim me."

"She drew a ring from her finger, and placing it in his hand, added:

"When the day is dark, and you are discouraged, look at this, remember that I am true, and take heart. Go! we must not incur my father's anger. Every day, as the evening closes in, I shall come here, where we have spent so many happy hours, to think of you."

"I shall think of you always, my love, and yet win the fairest bride in Italy. Till then, adieu!"

"Another moment and he was gone.

"For a long time the Lady Ginletta sat where he had left her, her head resting on one hand, in deep reverie. She was not despondent; she had great faith in Giovanni's truth and ability to perform his promise.

"A few days passed happily, and as the duke noted her bright face and buoyant step, he began to think the danger he had apprehended was but the phantom of his imagination, and half regretted that he had so far committed himself to the Duke of B—. This was done, however, and he called his daughter to his side one evening, to make known his matrimonial project.

"Oh, he is too old, papa, and I do not love him," answered Ginletta, lightly.

"No matter; you will learn to love him. His family is noble, and his estates have no rival," said the duke, with a gathering frown.

"But his soul is narrow, father; he could never make me happy; I should be miserable."

"Nonsense, child! What do you know of the measure of his soul? It is my will; do not oblige me to enforce it."

"In vain did she remind him of his promise.

"That was a foolish promise," he said, while a qualm of conscience made him uncomfortable. "It is my duty to provide for your future welfare. You will be envied by all the fair, when upon your head are bound the two tiaras."

"Say, rather, I shall be a weary captive whose chains will be none the less galling because forged of gold and jewels. Oh, father, let me stay with you! Do not sacrifice your child!"

"For the first time in her life her father left her in anger, and despair settled upon her soul. The matter was not referred to again, but the preparations for the bridal went rapidly forward. A new artist was employed, and the unfinished portrait was completed with the addition of the figure of the Duke of B—, who seemed about to clasp her in his embrace.

"Every evening she repaired to the gallery, as she had promised, and bitterly dwelt upon the fate that would separate her from her soul's love, and unite her to one whom daily she more detested. Was there no escape?"

"One evening, as she sat there, mourning her lost happiness, she was startled by a light footfall, and Giovanni stood beside her. In a moment she was in his arms.

"I knew I should find you here. I go far away, and could not resist the temptation to speak to you once more. But you are pale and sad, my love, and as then a shade of apprehension crossed his fine features, he added:

"What means this report I hear of the approaching marriage of the beautiful Lady of M— with the dark Duke of B—? Surely there is no truth in the rumour?"

"Only too much!" murmured Ginletta. "I am in despair."

"And she related her father's conversation with her, and the late rapid movements towards the consummation of his purpose.

"But your father is noble, and he loves you;

surely you can prevail upon him to allow you to remain as you are."

"No," said Ginletta, sadly. "Nothing will move him; he never was so harsh and stern before. Look here; see what has been done since you left; and she pointed to the picture just finished.

"Giovanni's brow darkened as he gazed upon it. Was he indeed to give his pearl to that sordid man? It was like giving the innocent lamb to the jaws of the wolf. A sudden inspiration seemed to seize him. Catching up the brush and colours which had been left lying near, with masterly art he threw an impalpable, misty veil over the features and figure of Ginletta, in which she seemed to be receding from the duke, while a few quick touches changed the expression of pleasure upon his countenance to one of intense longing and disappointment.

"Ginletta stood gazing at him as though spell-bound.

"What have you done, Giovanni?" she exclaimed, as she imagined her father's anger.

"It is an inspiration—a prophecy, Ginletta. I know not how, but I feel that all will yet be well. Try your father once more; he will surely yield. I will see you again; now I must not stay."

"Footsteps were approaching, and he had but just left when the duke entered the gallery, surprised to find his daughter still there.

"I hear the portraits are finished," he remarked, as he advanced towards where she still stood gazing upon the metamorphosis.

"How! what's this?" exclaimed the duke. "Whose work is this?"

"Oh, father, do not be too angry!" began Ginletta, in tremulous accents. "It was Giovanni."

"Giovanni! and has that low-born fellow dared to meet you clandestinely? Is that the reason you have taken such a violent fancy to the picture-gallery of late?"

"Nay, nay, father; I have not seen him before since the day he left. And he is not low-born. Surely the house of S— is as noble as our own."

"The house of S—?"

"Yes, father, he is the youngest brother of the Duke of S—; listen, and I will tell you all; and with rapid utterance she related to him all that I have told you before.

"The father's heart smote him as he looked upon the pale cheek of his beautiful daughter. Seeing an expression of sympathy upon his face she was emboldened to prefer her plea.

"Do not force me to marry this hateful duke, dear father. I shall die. My whole soul revolts from him; how then can I take upon myself the vows of a wife?"

"The duke had been intently regarding the changed picture while listening to this impassioned appeal; it seemed almost a revelation. Still darker shades of character were shadowed forth in the dark features, and the father's better angel seemed to whisper,—"will you sell your child for the pride of position—for the wealth you do not need? Will you see her fading, perhaps dying, only to gratify your unworthy ambition?"

"Then, too, he worshipped art, and the power of a master was visibly before him. This would have been of no avail while he believed in the low origin of Giovanni, for his pride of family was unconquerable. But the house of S— was in every respect equal to his own. Presently he turned to her and said:

"Release you from the duke and hand you over to Giovanni? Is that it, Ginletta?"

"Her smile was sufficient answer.

"Well, well, you shall be happy, child," he said, as he folded her in his arms and kissed away her blushes.

"The next morning Giovanni was surprised by a summons from the duke, and still more, upon obeying it, at his reception. The preparations went on as rapidly as ever for the bridal, but there was now no unwilling bride. This veiled picture has since been an heirloom."

The long day had waned, and the glowing colours of an Italian sunset were seen in the western sky. Thanking my hostess for her kindness and her romantic history, I hastened back to my inn to find my friend returned, and in a high state of excitement at my prolonged absence.

I soon gave an account of myself, and his interest in my story quite equalled my own.

"But," he added, "the country is too unsettled for you to be out alone safely."

"You must take better care of me, then," was my laughing reply. I. H.

DESERT TRAVELLING.—The moss that grows strongest on the north side of firs and other trees, in the latitude of Europe, gives, as is well known, a clue by which a course may be directed through a

forest. For, looking on the surrounding mosses of trees, much more moss will be observed in some one direction than in any other; and that moss, lying as it does on the north side of the several trees, is of course due south with reference to the observer. And as he walks on, and fresh trees come constantly in sight, he is able to correct any slight error of direction into which the peculiarities of particular trees may at first have led him. The Siberians travel guided by the ripples in the snow, which run in a pretty fixed direction, owing to the prevalence of a particular wind. The ripples in a desert of sand are equally good as guides; or the wind itself, if it happens to be blowing, especially to a person pushing through a tangled belt of forest. It requires very great practice to steer well by stars. In tropical countries the zodiacal stars, as Orion and Antares, give excellent east and west points.

CHANGES.

MANY and varied are the changes on this mundane sphere. Trials and sad changes are daily being wrought. Days, weeks and months glide into years, and years into eternity. Generation after generation enter the theatre of life; a few brief years pass, and the places which once knew them will know them no more for ever.

The beauty of youth is changed to old age. Time furrows the cheek and brow, and dims the eye. As the eyes fail to recognize earthly beauties, death effects a final change, by placing his signet on the brow, and the soul leaves its tabernacle of clay.

Our friends change. Those who hover around when fortune smiles, in adversity's dark hour vanish, and we are left homeless and friendless. We meet them, and they recognize us only by a slight nod, or with contempt depicted on their countenances, draw their garments more closely around them, as if fearing contamination, and pass us hurriedly by.

Changes are everywhere visible. In spring and summer flowers bloom, but as autumn nears, and the rude blast sweeps over them, they die. Thus it is with earthly pleasures; they are but fleeting and soon pass away.

The simple tastes of our forefathers have for ever fled. Then heaven alone was worshipped, and man was honoured according to his true worth. But, alas! all is changed. Now, gold fetters the heart of man and becomes his idol, and unless he possess the wealth of Croesus he is considered no better than the most degraded beggar.

Life is full of changes which follow each other in rapid succession. How changed the wanderer finds the home of his childhood after long, weary years of absence! Impatiently he walks the deck of the homeward-bound ship, and tries to discern in the distance the ever-remembered shores of his youth. Thoughts of home and of the loved ones there crowd his mind. Memory is busy conjuring up scenes of childhood, and in imagination he sees their surprise as they once more behold their long-lost brother. At last his vigilant eye spies the hills which surround his home. The time occupied by the noble ship ere she touches the shores of his native land seems lengthened into days, yet but a short time intervenes before he is again wending his way towards home.

He stands on the hill where in boyhood he used to play, and gazes upon the little cottage nestled in the valley amid clustering vines. He descends the hill, approaches the familiar gateway, and tremblingly raises the latch. With quickened step he reaches the door, but strange faces meet his expectant gaze, and stranger voices tell him those whom he seeks have long rested from mortal cares. With bowed head he entreasts of her whom he loved better than all the world beside, and who first taught him to lip "Our Father," to hear and pardon her erring son. In vain are his regrets; useless are his words of endearment; her voice is for ever hushed. Alas! how changed he finds his childhood's home. His life has indeed been fraught with changes.

All are liable to changes, and thus will it ever be, until the mortal life is exchanged for the immortal, and we bow before the "great white throne," and unite our voices with the redeemed who have gone before.

MAUD.

THE JOYS OF CHILDHOOD.—How very bright are the joys of childhood! What pleasanter occupation can there be for an aged sire just stepping within the recesses of the cold and silent grave, than to sit down in the sunset of his days and recall calmly the pleasure of his younger hours. In bright array they quickly pass before him. He remembers the time when he was an artless child, playing on his mother's knee. Light were his slumbers and innocent his

dreams. His thoughts were pure, and modesty was stamped upon his brow. No dark passions had found their way into his heart; no unholy thoughts disturbed his peacefulness; no cares were his; no troubles to oppress his heart. His little hands had never yet done any sinful act; his clear blue eye never yet looked on the boisterous scenes of revelry; his infant feet had never yet strayed into the paths of sin. He then knew nothing of evil, and looked on all with confidence. The babbling brook within the mossy vale was his delight. There, amidst the heat of summer days, his happy hours were spent. Beside its cool, sparkling waters he loved to lie and rest when wearied with his childish sports. Deep down within its depths his eyes would pierce, and he would there view visions which would enthral his soul. Greatness, future power and wealth occupied his young mind. And when the evening hour was come, and the moon rose upward in the heavens, there he still sat, and thought of the years with all their mysteries that were to come. With earnest eye he gazed upon the stars that shone like diamonds on the brow of night, and lofty aspirations chained him in their embrace. The departed great solemnly floated before him, and he resolved to be like them. His breathings were all to imitate their deeds, and he longed to have his name enrolled with theirs. Soon he went forth to contend with the world, but the scorching breath of the deceitful quickly blasted all his hopes, and crushed his high desires. Thus has it ever been; thus will it ever be. Oh, who would not be a child again, if only for one hour? Who would not again kneel at his mother's feet as in days of yore, and breathe his simple prayer of faith to heaven? Wearied with life, the man of care casts a longing look back, and remembers with sad pleasure the joys that are destined never more to illumine his way. Oh, the joys of our childhood, bright and sparkling, how lovely are thy scenes!—B. M. D.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

HAIR WASH.—Take one ounce of borax, half an ounce of camphor, powder these ingredients finely, and dissolve them in a quart of boiling water; when cool, the solution will be ready for use. The camphor will form into lumps, but the water will be sufficiently impregnated. This wash cleanses and strengthens the hair, preserves the colour, and prevents early baldness. The hair must be damped with it frequently.

LACE may be restored to its original whiteness by first ironing it slightly, then folding it and sewing it into a clean linen bag, which is placed for twenty-four hours in pure olive oil. Afterwards the bag is boiled in a solution of soap and water for fifteen minutes, then well rinsed in lukewarm water, and finally dipped in water containing a slight proportion of starch. The lace is then taken from the bag, and stretched on pins to dry.

GOOD INK.—Common India ink, simply dissolved in water, is excellent for writing. It being composed of carbon, and a little else, it will keep in any climate or place from year to year, perfectly sweet. Even freezing does not injure its good qualities; a simple cover is all that is required to prevent evaporation and keep the dust from falling into it. The stroke of the pen made with it is quite black if desired, and will endure unchanged to all time, provided the paper or parchment remains sound; and even papers that have been burned and not fallen to pieces, with this kind of writing upon them, remain quite plain to read.

SALE OF THE SAN DONATO GALLERY.—The sale of the pictures collected by Prince Demidoff, and which formed the famous gallery of San Donato, in Florence, created immense excitement recently in Paris; the works were only twenty-three in number, but every one had a high reputation, and many presented the choicest known examples of the artists' works. The picture which fetched the largest sum, namely, 182,000 francs, was "The Congress of Munster," by Terburg, but the great historical interest of the work had much to do with this result. The works whose artistic value only were the most highly esteemed, were gems by Cuypp, Paul Potter, Hobbema (2), Isaac Ostade, and Teniers. The twenty-three works sold for 1,363,650 francs, or, on an average, nearly 2,400l. each. Representatives of the authorities of the Louvre and of the National Gallery were present, but neither purchased anything.

LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.—A case which came before the borough justices at Doncaster will interest both owners and tenants of houses. Mr. Bacchus appeared for the purpose of obtaining an ejectment warrant against a tenant named William Fletcher, occupying a house, No. 5, South St. James's-street,

at a weekly rent, on whom he had served a notice to quit, but he had refused to go out. He then served a second notice on the 30th of March, at half-past eight in the morning, to either go out or appear at the court to explain why he had not left. As Fletcher had neither gone out nor appeared at the court, he asked that he might have a warrant for ejectment, as seven days of twenty-four hours had expired that morning since he gave the second notice. Mr. Fisher said the Act of Parliament required seven "clear" days to be given. The applicant contended that he had complied with the Tenements Act, and had given seven clear days' notice. Mr. Fisher then referred to the interpretation of the word "clear," and also to several cases bearing upon the point, which, on being read, clearly bore out the construction he put upon it, namely, that seven clear days meant seven days exclusive of the day of the service and the day of hearing. The application was accordingly refused, as really only five days had elapsed, and he would, therefore, have to give another notice, and then, if the tenant refused to go out, he might make his application.

FACETIE.

WHY is Ireland like a bottle of wine? Because it has a Cork in it.

WHY is a spoilt child like a straw bonnet?—Because it is better for a good trimming.

A THRIFTY wife wonders why men can't do something useful. Mightn't they as well amuse themselves in smoking ham as cigars?

A YOUNG fop about starting on a voyage, proposed to purchase a life-preserver. "Oh, you'll not want it," suggested the clerk; "bags of wind won't sink."

WE are curious to know how many feet in the female arithmetic go to make a mile. We never met with a lady's foot whose shoe was not, to say the least, "a mile too big for her."

INTERESTING TO ORNITHOLOGISTS.

TIME: Early Spring.

Jan: "Weather's turned mild, Tom. I heard the cuckoo yes'day."

Tom: "Git' long. A two-legged cuckoo, I reckon."

Jan: "Noa, 'twasn't. 'Twas a proper cuckoo, I'll swear."

NEVER despise counsels from whatever quarter they may reach you. Remember the pearl is keenly sought after in spite of the coarse shell which envelops it.

Mrs. JONES, a farmer's wife, says, "I believe I've got the tenderest-hearted boys in the world. I can't tell one of them to fetch a pail of water but what he'll burst out a cryin'."

A GREENHORN sat a long time very attentive, musing upon a cane-bottomed chair. At length he said: "I wonder what fellow took the trouble to find all them ar holes and put straws around 'em."

HAIR-DRESSING IN 1868.

Lady: "My hair is not so thick as when you last dressed it, I fancy."

Hair-dresser: "Well, ma'am, I must say it is not so voluminous as it was; but, really, one can improvise it so well now, that original material is not of much consequence!"

A YOUNG candidate for the legal profession was asked what he should do first when employed to bring an action. "Ask for money on account," was the prompt reply. He passed.

FALSE hair ceases, now-a-days, to be a deception; in France the bridegroom presents a variety of different-shaped *chignons* to his bride, in the *corbeille de mariage*, which it is his part of the programme to furnish.

NON-SUITED.

Lawyer: "The coat's too long, the vest too long; in fact, the entire suit's too long."

Tailor: "Dear me, sir, I'm very sorry, but the fact is, I—I thought that gentlemen of your profession preferred long suits."

Nobody likes to be nobody; but everybody is pleased to think himself somebody. And everybody is somebody; but when anybody thinks himself to be somebody, he generally thinks everybody else to be nobody.

LOVE.—A matter-of-fact philosopher asserts that "Love is to domestic life what butter is to bread—it possesses little nourishment in itself, but gives substantial a grand relish, without which they would be hard to swallow."

DR. ABERNATHY rarely met his match, but on one occasion he fairly owned that he had. He was sent for by an innkeeper who had a quarrel with his wife, who had scarred his face with her nails, so that the

poor man was bleeding and much disfigured. Abernathy thought this an opportunity not to be lost for admonishing the offender, and said: "Madam, are you not ashamed of yourself to treat your husband thus—the husband who is the head of all—your head, madam, in fact?" "Well, doctor!" fiercely returned the virago, "and may I not scratch my own head?"

A GENTLEMAN, passing through a potato-field, observed an Irishman planting some potatoes. He inquired of him what kind he had there. "Raw ones, to be sure," replied the son of Erin; "if they were boiled, they wouldn't grow."

FOOTE AND THE BARBER.

Foote, who loved anything eccentric, hoping to extract some wit from a barber, whom he justly concluded to be an odd character, pulled off his hat, and, thrusting his head through a pane into the shop, called out:

"Is Jemmy Wright at home?"

The barber immediately forcing his own through another pane into the street, replied:

"No, sir; he has just popped out."

Foote laughed heartily, and gave the man a guinea.

JUST AS THE TWIG IS BENT, THE TREE IS INCLINED.—A fond parent, anxious that his infant son should be sharp in his wits, and profound in his thoughts, has sent him to sea, so that he may "be rocked in the cradle of the deep."

GIRLETS OF A LIVE GOOSE.

A green one, who had a great desire to possess a goose "alive," set off to a neighbouring town, resolved to buy one and feed it up for himself.

Having made a successful bargain, he was returning home, when he was met by a friend, to whom he showed his purchase.

"Why," said his friend, on seeing the goose, "they have given you no *giblets* with him; you have been cheated."

The smiling countenance of the Irishman was turned to a look of utter dismay; he reflected for a moment, then turned back, and actually walked a distance of two miles to ask the market woman for the giblets to the loose goose.

A DESERVED RETORT.—A spendthrift, who had nearly wasted all his patrimony, seeing an acquaintance in a coat not of the newest cut, told him he thought it had been his great-grandfather's coat. "So it was," said the gentleman; "and I have also my great-grandfather's lands, which is more than you can say."

COOK'S "PERKISITES."

Cook: "Only five shillings! Why, I've broke, this year, four soup tureens, six dishes, three glass jugs, and fourteen tumblers; three dozen pla—"

Conscientious Crockery Dealer: "Well, well, cook, I won't be hard on you. You shall have five shillings more."

WHO SUPPOSED HE COULD?—Paterfamilias vainly struggling at the supper-table to dissect a "spring chicken," of, we are afraid to guess how many summers, was fain to give up the attempt in despair, saying by way of apology to his guests that he really couldn't help it.—*Fun.*

RIGHT HE HARE.

Lady (pronouncing the town as *spelt*): "Is this the Hertford train?"

Ticket Collector: "Hertford! Oh, you mean 'Arford, Mum—we don't sound the 'he,' only the 'har,' you see!"—*Fun.*

SCIENTIFIC NOTE.—A contemporary states that Dr. Shortt is expected shortly—as might have been anticipated—to arrive from India; and further alleges that he is bringing with him for the Zoological Society's Gardens several specimens of the walking fish of India. We presume the interesting creature combines the characteristics of the sole and eel tribes.—*Fun.*

UGLY FOR EVER!

An enameller and painter of women's faces, and cosmetic vender, who advertises herself as "the great Beautifier to the Royal Courts of Europe," and whom we may call Madame Jeezabel, winds up one of her horrid puffs by declaring that—

"All other persons endeavouring to copy the beautiful art of which she is the sole professor, and who are vending dangerous and destructive compounds under the name of enamels, powders, and liquids, in imitation of her Royal Arabian Preparations, commit a gross fraud upon ladies."

And ladies, when they employ Madame Jeezabel's Royal Arabian Preparations to colour their skin and falsify their faces, commit a gross fraud upon gentlemen. That is to say, they commit a gross fraud upon gentlemen in so far as they can deceive any, but there are very few men so dull of eye as to be

unable at a glance to detect a fraudulent complexion. The ladies who attempt to practise this imposition must all be purblind, or colour-blind. Otherwise they would need only a moment's view in their looking-glasses to see what an unnatural repulsive appearance their visages present. All mankind, possessing ordinary acuteness of vision, can tell paint, when they see it, from skin; and, if they could see through it, they would see the skin under it in a most unwholesome and disgusting state, produced by the operation of irritating substances and the obstruction of the pores. The continued application of any sort of plaster to a lady's face for the purpose of beautifying it can only result in rendering the poor simpleton ugly for ever.—*Punch*.

THE ROD, AND HOW TO USE IT.

That Dizzy is a schoolmaster—
The proof you have before you:
The rod, the rod, you naughty boys—
The rod he keeps hung o'er you!
Venture to vote as you think right,
On Bright's or Gladstone's grounds,
And good or bad, he'll fine you round,
Each, say, a thousand pounds.
For that's the ticket for a seat,
Taking the lot together;
Though some may manage for a song
Election storms to weather—
And dissolution is the rod,
Your master keeps in pickle,
The tobbies of rebellious boys
At Westminster to tickle.
Then shut up your abusive throats,
And moderate your cholera,
And sing small, as becomes a lot
Of Dizzy's and Queen's scholars.

—*Punch*.

VOX ET PRÆTEREA NIHIL.

Sergeant (to Captain Tiffany, of the Volunteers, who has been drilling with the Guards): "You should give the word of command a little louder, sir; the men can't hear you."

Captain Tiffany: "Oh, but I'm not going to damage my tenor voice, you know, sergeant!"—*Punch*.

NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.—The success of the Abyssinian Expedition will probably suggest a happy thought to some ingenious disciple of St. Crispin. Completely to render to the Conqueror of Theodorus all the honours which by precedent are the due of a victorious Generalissimo, we may expect that the name of Napier will shortly be given to a new sort of boots.—*Punch*.

A CARMAN'S COMPLAINT.

Touching the late rise in fares, and the working of it; namely, that the higher the tariff of fares, the higher the charge for cabs by proprietors.

It's a'rd lines with us poor dear cabbies—
Ill-used and innocent as babbies!
Now tizzy fares to bobs is risen,
Poor Cabby finds the bobs ain't his'n.
We made ourselves so precious busy
Till 'Ardy rose that hextra tizzy!
The party as we wished might get it
Was him as druv the cab, not let it.
We thought, acoz we made the fuss,
In course, the tizzy'd be for us;
But—it's enough to vex a saint—
We finds that now it's come, it ain't.
All on't—if we'd known, we'd been quieter—
Goes to the blessed proper-ietor.
They've clapped it on four-wheel and shoful,
Till what we pays is something woful!
We can't 'arn money, nor yet love:
Drivers! Bless if we are!—we're druv!

—*Punch*.

SIR JOHN PAKINGTON informs us that every shot from a 9-inch gun costs 85 shillings, and every shot from a 12-inch gun 162 shillings. We now see the full force of the expression, "standing the shot." One could soon fire away the Bank of England at this rate.—*Toma-hawk*.

WATERING THE ROADS.—Water-carts shall ply in the streets immediately after rain, or in fine weather the last thing at night, in order that the roads may become dry by the morning. This rule does not however apply to crossings, which are to be kept thoroughly saturated at all hours of the day.—*Toma-hawk*.

DR. LIVINGSTONE AND HIS OBITUARIES.—Dr. Livingstone, it is hoped, will be in England this month. His home-coming will be strange and curiously suggestive. He will be welcomed as if from the grave. His obituaries have been written in almost all languages, and his character has been carefully

and lovingly estimated. It is recorded of the great Emperor Charles V. that, to know what it was to be dead, he caused himself to be confined, and gave instructions that the entire service for the dead should be faithfully gone through. His wishes, of course, were fully complied with, and the still living monarch, though "retired from business," had the satisfaction of enjoying in the monastery of Juste, as far as was possible, all the honours accorded by the Church to the illustrious dead. Dr. Livingstone, however, has a far greater honour in store for him. It will be his privilege to know, not only that he has died and been buried, but that he has passed out of life loaded with the honours and eulogies of all civilized nations; that he has died universally regretted, and that not a single stain-drop has fallen upon his fair and well-earned fame. Such an honour falls to few of the sons of men. In Dr. Livingstone's case, however, it is an honour which no honourable man will grudge. He is a true hero, and is justly entitled to a hero's praise.

TO MARY IN ABSENCE.

MARY! my guiding star, why is thy light
Absent while round flock the ravens of night?
Why send no tidings my bosom to cheer?
Hast thou forgotten me? Am I still dear?
Cruel one! write to thy minstrel once more,
Send me one word of hope, one, I implore!
My heart strings are breaking, and fearful control
Madness, the demon, usurps o'er my soul:
When will thine eyes on me, love-lighted, beam?
Nightly I dream of thee, nightly I dream.

Mary, my bird of song, when will thy voice
Sweeter than harp or lute, make me rejoice?
When will thy hand of snow fondly press mine,
When thy dear face shine forth, almost divine?
Oh, can it be that thy bosom is cold,
Gone all the rapture that warmed it of old?
Lost to me ever that exquisite bliss,
Of feeling when near thee that naught is amiss?
Absent, how gloomy all nature doth seem;
Nightly I dream of thee, nightly I dream.

Left of the house of my fathers the last,
Lingering here among wrecks of the past,
Standing as towers, when the fane is o'erthrown,
Only one column, storm-shattered and lone;
Blame me not, Mary, for wishing to be,
Sick, sad, and forlorn, in communion with thee;
Thine is the magic that made thee my muse,
Thine the soft accent that heart-ache subdues,
Thine the soft smile lighting gloom with its gleam;
Nightly I dream of thee, nightly I dream.

H. C. H.

GEMS.

SLANDER not others because they have slandered you; bite not a reptile because you have felt his bite.

PLEASURE is a shadow, wealth is vanity, and power a pageant; but knowledge is ecstatic in enjoyment, perennial in fame, unlimited in space, and infinite in duration.

THERE are two worlds: one in which we tarry but a little while, and which we leave never to re-enter; the other which we must soon enter we never leave.

Be always frank and true; spurn every sort of affectation and disguise. Have the courage to confess your ignorance and awkwardness. Confide your faults and follies to but few.

MEN's lives should be like the days, more beautiful in the evening; or like the seasons, aglow with promise, and the autumn rich with golden sheaves, where good words and deeds have ripened on the field.

It is not high crimes, such as robbery and murder, which destroy the peace of society, so much as the village gossip, family quarrels, jealousies, and bickerings between neighbours—meddlesomeness and tattling are the cankers that eat into all social happiness.

MARRIED AND NOT MARRIED.—A bill is passing through Parliament to remedy, as far as may be, in a particular instance, a blunder that ought no longer to be possible. A quarter of a century ago a chapel of ease was built and consecrated in a hamlet in the parish of Sapperton, Gloucestershire, and marriages have been solemnized in this chapel apparently as a matter of course. It turns out that in supposing he could legally solemnize marriages because the chapel was consecrated, the clergyman was, to use the language of the bill, "under an erroneous impression." Parliament does from time to time in these cases, as they come to light, the only thing it can do after

the event—viz., pass a bill like this now before it, declaring all the marriages valid; but it is to be hoped that the forthcoming report of the Marriage Law Commission will propose measures for putting an end to this scandal, and enable men and women to know for certain whether, when they go through the usual ceremonial at a church, they are really married, or whether they are liable to find out, years afterwards, that the clergyman was "under an erroneous impression" when he solemnly pronounced them married.

STATISTICS.

STATISTICS OF UNITED STATES TONNAGE.—The director of the Bureau of Statistics has compiled and published a complete list of all the merchant vessels of the United States by name, register, tonnage, and home port. The total number of vessels is 12,207, of which 542 are ships, 745 barques, 608 brigs, 8862 schooners, 2841 sloops, 46 yachts, 58 longboats, and 2505 steam vessels of various kinds. The total tonnage of the vessels contained in the list is 2,755,004.

THE FRENCH COTTON TRADE.—The quantity of raw cotton entered for home consumption in France in 1867 was 95,908 tons, as compared with 120,036 tons in 1866, and 81,397 tons in 1865. To these totals, observes the *Times*, the United Kingdom contributed in 1867, 22,857 tons, against 42,394 tons in 1866, and 34,527 tons in 1865; Turkey, 7,080 tons in 1867, against 8,527 tons in 1866, and 11,695 tons in 1865; Egypt, 5,745 tons in 1867, against 7,140 tons in 1866, and 12,109 tons in 1865; British India, 13,395 tons in 1867, against 8,638 tons in 1866, and 9,645 tons in 1865; the United States, 37,006 tons in 1867, against 43,226 tons in 1866, and 2,933 tons in 1865; and Brazil, 2,859 tons in 1867, against 4,199 tons in 1866, and 1,807 tons in 1865. The total value of the raw cotton entered for home consumption in France last year was 13,330,549*l.* against 17,043,763*l.* in 1866, and 11,986,420*l.* in 1865.

MISCELLANEOUS.

HIS Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has presented a pair of altar candlesticks for use in Sandringham Church.

FIFTEEN thousand acres are now under sugar cultivation by Europeans in Tahiti, and ten thousand in the Marquesas Islands. The sugar is of fine quality, and in excellent demand in Australia, New Zealand and California.

HIGH-HEELED BOOTS.—The medical papers are writing against the modern fashion of high-heeled boots. They say it causes corns, cramp, lameness, at an early age, and worst thing of all, one which ladies who figure on the stage will certainly regard as a great evil, it lessens the size of the calf, and makes the leg lose its symmetry.

It was rumoured in the lobby of the House of Commons that the Queen, on recovering from the shock of learning the attempt upon the life of the Duke of Edinburgh, expressed a desire to respite the assassin. It was, however, respectfully intimated to her that the message to that effect must inevitably arrive too late to be of avail. Some still declare that a telegram has gone nevertheless.

LETTER WRITING.—An angry letter never accomplishes the desired end, and an insolent one harms none but the writer. This is true of all correspondence, but more especially when applied to communications of a business nature. In this department the true gentleman is easily recognized; and with him, above all others, it is gratifying to deal. His demands, which, if couched in other language, would be rejected, are often complied with, and whatever the business there is satisfaction in performing it.

A PETRIFIED HARE.—A singular fossil was found some time since by Mr. Jeffrey Wilson, of Filey. Having wandered on the sands in search of pebbles, as far as Speeton Cliffs, his attention was arrested by something of a remarkable shape, in what by geologists is called "Speeton clay," a seam which has been for many years, and still is, exceedingly rich in fossils of various kinds. On going up to it he found it to be a perfectly-formed petrified hare, sitting in a crouching position, and from one of the ears being laid flat on the head, it is presumed that in ages gone by a quantity of earth had fallen upon her, and thus poor "pussy" had become embedded. This distinctly developed specimen, which has caused great interest amongst the clergy, gentry, &c., who have gone to see it, measures about 16 in. in length, and weighs nearly 14 lb. Mr. Wilson was also fortunate in finding near the cliff an immense snake-stone of great beauty.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SARAH.—It is the same in both languages, and is spelt "Sara."

R. G.—Laman Blanchard, periodical writer, was born in 1803, and died in 1845. A life of him was written in that year by Lord Lytton.

SEILA.—Your handwriting is well fitted for the office you name; the only requisite is, knowing it to be good, not to become careless.

PUBLICO.—There is a pronouncing dictionary of the French language by "Contandry," which may be purchased at any publisher's of foreign works, price about 7s. 6d.

F. I. GRANTLEY.—1. The flower you name is spelt with the double "l," and should be pronounced as if written "Ca-mel-yar." 2. Handwriting good and ladylike.

BEJAMIN.—Gaff is a kind of boom, employed in small ships, to extend the upper edges of those sails which are secured to the masts by hoops or lacing, and which are usually extended by a boom below.

ERNEST.—The Reverend John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was born in 1703, and died in 1791. Several lives have been written of him; one by Southey was published in 1820.

L. F.—A master is not entitled to deduct from the wages of his servant the value of goods which have been broken or damaged by the carelessness of such servant, unless there has been a special contract to that effect.

T. MONK.—Minorca is one of the Balearic Islands, in the Mediterranean, belonging to the Spaniards. It was captured by the British in 1798, but was restored to Spain at the close of the war.

ROSE.—A letter once posted, is considered the property of the person to whom it is addressed, and the receiver may not therefore give back a letter, under any circumstances whatever.

CECILIE.—Orchestra is an Italian word, meaning the enclosed part of a theatre, between the stage and the audience, which is occupied by the musicians; sometimes, also, it is applied to designate, collectively, the performers themselves, as a full orchestra, a thin orchestra.

R. H.—To remove redness of the skin, mix half an oz. of blanched bitter almonds with half a pint of soft water; make an emulsion by beating the almonds and water together, then strain through some muslin; bathe the face occasionally with this mixture.

ELAB.—Write your name by kindness, love, and mercy, on the hearts of the many you come in contact with, and you will never be forgotten. Your name, your deeds, will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind, as the stars on the brow of evening.

L. M.—Restaurants are to be found in every quarter of Paris; they are admirably conducted, and in most cases it is cheaper to dine in them than at hotels. Some of the best are to be found in the Palais Royal and on the Boulevards. There are restaurants à la carte, and à prix fixe (fixed prices); it is better to adopt the latter.

H. TURNER.—*Rénaissance* means the revival of anything which has long been extinct. The term is specially applied in France to the time of the revival of letters and arts, and still more particularly to the style of building and decoration, which came into vogue in the early part of the sixteenth century.

ELISE MUIR.—1. Your handwriting is not bad; but if you intend to become a governess, and wish your pupils to excel, you must be more careful in the formation of your letters, when giving them examples to copy from. 2. Do not use soda. Nothing is better than plain soap and water, but the soap must be mild.

DAYNAL.—Prorogation is an interruption of the sitting or proceedings of Parliament by Royal authority. Every bill must be renewed de novo, after a prorogation. Parliament is never prorogued for more than eight days, but the Crown may, notwithstanding the prorogation, summon it for the despatch of business by giving fourteen days' notice.

J. TAYLOR.—A good hair-curling liquid may be made as follows: 2 oz. of borax, 1 drachm of powdered gum senegal; put into 1 quart of hot water; stir, and as soon as the ingredients are dissolved, add 2 oz. of spirits of wine strongly impregnated with camphor. On retiring to rest, wet the roots of the hair with the above liquid.

C. KESTER.—Talc is a mineral genus, divided into two species, the common and the indurated; the first is massive, disseminated in plates, imitative, or crystallized in small six-sided tables; it is translucent, flexible, but not elastic; it yields to the nail; before the blow-pipe, it first whitens, and then fuses into an enamel globe; it consists of silica, 62; magnesia, 27; alumina, 1-5; oxide of iron, 3-5; and water, 6. It is found in beds of clay-slate and mica-

slate, in Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Porthshire, Salisbury, the Tyrol, and St. Gothard; it is an ingredient in rouge for the toilet, communicating softness to the skin; it gives the flesh polish to soft alabaster figures, and is also used in porcelain paste. The second species, or talc-slate, has a greenish-gray colour, is massive, with tabular fragments, translucent on the edges, soft, with a white streak, easily cut or broken, but not flexible, and has a greasy feel; it occurs in the same localities as the other. It is employed in the porcelain and crayon manufactures, and also as a crayon itself. 2. The material can be obtained at most purveyors of chemicals.

A. CONSTANT READER.—To remove superfluous hair, take 16 oz. of fresh-burnt lime, 2 oz. of pearlash, and 2 oz. of sulphur of potash; reduce to a fine powder in a mortar, then put it into closely-corked phials; first bathe the part with a little warm water; then a little of the powder made into a paste must be immediately applied; should it irritate the skin, wash it off with hot water or vinegar.

SEPTIMUS.—In heraldry supporters are figures represented on each side of the shield, supporting or guarding the same; they are borne of right by all Peers, Knights of the Garter, Knights Grand Crosses of the Bath, also by chiefs of the Scottish clans, and the Barons of Nova Scotia. Supporters are not borne by the Spiritual Peers, and are only granted in England by command of the Sovereign.

JACK THE FIRST.—To remove dandruff. Take a thimbleful of powdered refined borax (can be had at any druggist's or chemist's shop); let it dissolve in a teaspoonful of water; first brush the head well, then wet a brush with the mixture, and apply it to the head. Do this every day for a week, and twice a week after for a few times, and you will effectually remove the dandruff.

ESTHER.—Cork is the exterior bark of a tree belonging to the genus of the oak; it grows wild in the southern parts of Europe, particularly in France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. When the tree is about twenty-five years old, it is fit to have the bark stripped off, and this process can be repeated every eighth year thereafter, the bark improving as the tree gets older.

GEORGE.—The word *New* is not, as many imagine, derived from the adjective *new*. Between the years 1595 and 1750, it was a prevalent practice to put over the periodical publications of the day, the initial letters of the compass, importing that these papers contained intelligence from the four quarters of the globe; and from this practice is derived the term "newspaper."

LINES FOR ROSALIE.

Raise your heads, ye virgin lilies—
Lilies white, so chaste and free!
Bend no more with artless grace,
Mirrored in the water's face—
You shall live with Rosalies.

Lift your stems of shining silver;
Open wide your leaves to me;
You shall live and never fade,
When you're with the fairest maid—
On the breast of Rosalies.

Lilies, hear you what I'm saying?
Fadless glories you shall be;
Careful then lest wavelets drift you,
Stooping low, I gently lift you—
You shall live with Rosalies.

F. R. M.

J. KENT.—The cannon-ball tree grows only in the tropics. It is generally about sixty-five feet high, has beautiful crimson flowers, in clusters, and very fragrant. The resemblance of the fruit to cannon-balls has given it its martial name. When fully ripe, the balls burst with a loud report. The shells are worked into cups and a great variety of other useful and ornamental household utensils.

MARTIN.—There are few who would desire to be severed from the past, to wish that all behind was oblivion, that the sweet memories of his young days, of a father's kindness and a mother's love, of friends, or of one who had been "nearer and dearer still than all others," should be "as if they never had been;" for what would there be worth living for, if dark shadows hung o'er the past, clouded the present, and darkened the future?

POETRY.—"Oh, shall I not come back again," by John Hopkins; "The Honest Factory Girl," by S. T. L.; "The Soldier's Farewell," "The Sailor Boy," "Waiting for Thee," by Emily H. White; "The Flower of the West," by R. A.; "Spring Beauties," by J. S. B.; "The Explanation," by Minnie; "Lines," by Charles Zimmermann; are respectfully declined, some being too lengthy, others crude and not up to our standard.

LOUIS.—The examination for attachés in the Foreign Office is as follows: Orthography and handwriting, general intelligence, as evinced by the manner in which the candidate acquires himself, French writing, Latin, (grammar and translation), French, German, geography, a fair knowledge of the political history of Europe, and of North and South America, from the year 1600 to 1860 inclusive, and the most important international transactions during that period.

MARIA L.—1. To remove freckles, take one pint of tincture of benzoin, half a pint of rose, a quarter of an oz. of oil of rosemary; mix well together. One teaspoonful of this must be put into half a gill of water, dip a towel in it, and rub the face well night and morning. 2. To clean the teeth, take one lb. of precipitated chalk, one oz. of powdered orris, one oz. of powdered starch, mix; after sifting, it will be ready for use. 3. Handwriting requires constant and careful practice.

MATILDA.—To prepare marking-ink for linen, dissolve 1 drachm of nitrate of silver in three-quarters of an ounce of water; add to the solution as much liquid ammonia as will re-dissolve the precipitated oxide, with sap-green to colour it, and gum water to make the quantity amount to 1 oz. Traces written with this liquid should be first heated before the fire to expel the excess of ammonia, and then exposed to the sun to blacken; for this liquid, linen requires no previous preparation.

CINCINNATUS.—Hoe is an Anglo-Saxon word; it is an implement of husbandry employed to remove weeds, to make furrows, and to raise the mould round the roots of plants; there are several kinds of hoes; the most common consists of a flat iron blade, having a thin round crooked bar of the same material, about eight inches long, projecting from the middle of its upper edge, at an acute angle with it; to the end of this bar an iron ring or tab is attached, into which a long wooden handle is fitted; this is termed the draw-hoe,

because, when in use, it is drawn towards the operator, in contradistinction to the thrust or Dutch-hoe, which consists of a blade of iron, fixed to the end of a long handle in continuation of it, and is so called from its being thrust forward when in use.

GREYHOUND.—Portfires, in artillery, are paper cases, wet with paste, having one end folded down and filled with saltpetre, sulphur, and meal powder. They are used instead of slow matches, in discharging pieces of ordnance. Portfires are of four different descriptions: the common portfire, which is sixteen inches long, and will burn fifteen minutes; the percussion portfire, which burns five minutes; the miner's portfire, and the slow portfire, which will burn from three to four hours.

A YOUNG COMMERCIAL.—1. India, either of the Presidencies, would afford a capital field for the energies of a clever young man of business, but situations, however, are only to be obtained by the interest of merchants in London, who generally train their clerks at home, choosing from among them the best to send to their establishments in India. 2. Salary depends entirely upon experience, ability, and the nature of the trade. 3. You can obtain Vol. VIII. of THE LONDON READER, price 4s. 6d., on application to the publisher.

FRANK.—By the word Dissolution is meant the civil death of the Parliament, which may be effected at the pleasure of the Crown, by the demise of the Crown, or by length of time (seven years). It puts an end to the representative character of the members, and a Parliament cannot be assembled until after a general election. After the death of the Sovereign, Parliament must be dissolved within six months, and if it be prorogued or adjourned, it must assemble immediately, even though the day be Sunday; if there be no Parliament in existence at the time of such death, the old Parliament may meet again for six months.

J. VALENTINE.—The civil form of marriage is performed before a Registrar of Marriages; three weeks' notice must be given to that official for the district. The ceremony consists of merely answering a few questions, making a declaration of the intention to take each other as man and wife, receiving a certificate of marriage. No wedding-ring is necessary, (though usual), and the fee is only a few shillings. The same notice is also required for marriage by ordinary licence. The cost of this licence is about 2l. 10s., and must be obtained at Doctors' Commons. Marriage by banns entails only the expense of the fees to the clerk and clergyman, which vary according to circumstances, but are generally very little.

B. N. M., thirty, good-looking ing, and very fond of home. **LEZZIE A.**, twenty-four, dark, and affectionate. Respondent must be about twenty-nine, and steady.

SARAH F., eighteen, thoroughly domesticated, very fair, and of medium height; a tradesman preferred.

ROSE, twenty, fair, brown hair and eyes, 5 ft., fond of home. A tradesman preferred.

M. A. H., eighteen, medium height, blue eyes, light hair, dark complexion. Respondent must be about twenty-two, steady, and fond of home.

EMILY C., eighteen, rather stout and short, cheerful and good-tempered, respectable, but has no money. Respondent must be young; a sailor preferred.

D. S. C., twenty-one, a tradesman, good-looking, income, 400l. Respondent must be pretty, domesticated, and have a small income; a young widow not objected to.

LEAH MARRIOTT, seventeen, brown hair, dark eyes, pretty, and fond of singing, but has no money. Respondent must be dark, tall, and not more than twenty-two. A respectable tradesman preferred.

VIOLET AND ROSE.—"Violet," eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, light hair, and fond of home. Respondent must be about twenty-one, dark. "Rose," seventeen, below the medium height, dark brown eyes and hair, lively. Respondent must be about twenty, and dark.

LIVELY ONE, HAPPY NEIL, and ANNIE.—"Lively One," nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and fair. "Happy Neil," dark, blue eyes, and medium height. "Annie," fair, medium height. Respondents must be gentlemanly; friends not objected to.

S. P. S. C., twenty-six, a widower, 5 ft. 11 in., fair, light brown hair, good looking, son of a farmer, no trade, small income. Respondent must be about the same age, with a similar income; no objection to a widow, if not more than one child.

MARY HELEN, JEANNETTE, and PET.—"Mary Helen," eighteen (a blonde), medium height, good-tempered, accomplished, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be respectable. "Jeannette," nineteen, brown hair and eyes, medium height, and will have 1,000l. when of age. Respondent must be fair and tall. "Pet," seventeen (a brunette), merry laughing eyes, accomplished, and domesticated. An engineer preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

GEORGE BARTHELM is responded to by—"Maggie," thirty-six, with an income.

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London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 234, Strand, by J. WATSON.